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The Life and Works  
of  
Alfred Lord Tennyson

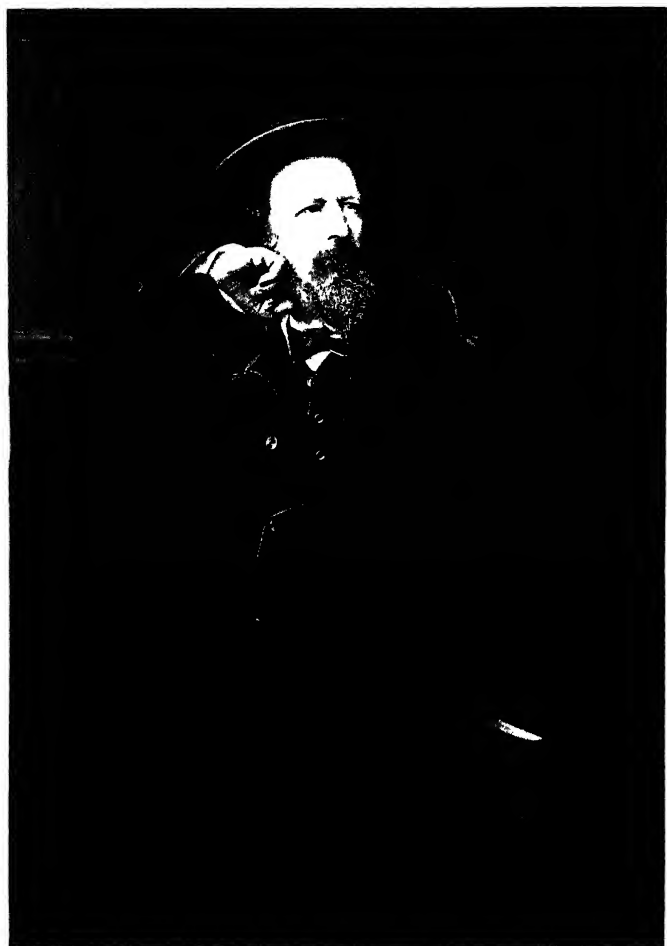
IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME VII









*Walker & Boucalt, ph. sc.*

*Alfred Tennyson.  
from the photograph by John. Mayall.*





The Works of  
Alfred  
Lord Tennyson  
Poet Laureate

VOLUME III

LONDON  
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
1899

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*This Edition consists of Ten Hundred and Fifty Copies*

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## ILLUSTRATION

Alfred Tennyson ( $\frac{3}{4}$  length), photogravure plate from the  
 photograph by John Mayall . . . *Frontispiece*



## EXPERIMENTS



## BOÄDICEA

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian  
    legionaries  
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid  
    and Druidess,  
Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily  
    charioted,  
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her  
    fierce volubility,  
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony  
    Cámulodúne,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a  
    wild confederacy.

‘ They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain’s  
    barbarous populaces,  
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they  
    pity me supplicating ?  
Shall I heed them in their anguish ? shall I  
    brook to be supplicated ?  
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian,  
    Trinobant !

## BOÄDICEA

Must their ever-ravenging eagle's beak and talon  
annihilate us ?  
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily  
quivering ?  
Bark an answer, Britain's raven ! bark and  
blacken innumerable,  
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the  
carcase a skeleton,  
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the  
wilderness, wallow in it,  
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be  
propitiated.  
Lo their colony half-defended ! lo their colony,  
Cámulodúne !  
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a  
barbarous adversary.  
There the hive of Roman liars worship an  
emperor-idiot.  
Such is Rome, and this her deity : hear it, Spirit  
of Cássivëlaún !

‘ Hear it, Gods ! the Gods have heard it, O  
Icenian, O Coritanian !  
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Cati-  
euchlanian, Trinobant.  
These have told us all their anger in miraculous  
utterances,  
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur  
heard aërially,

## BOÄDICEA

Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an  
    enemy massacred,  
Phantom wail of women and children, multi-  
    tudinous agonies.  
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom  
    bodies of horses and men ;  
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the re-  
    fluent estuary ;  
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily  
    tottering—  
There was one who watch'd and told me—down  
    their statue of Victory fell.  
Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony  
    Cámulodúne,  
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we  
    care to be pitiful ?  
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we  
    dandle it amorously ?

‘Hear Icenian, Catiueuchlanian, hear Cori-  
    tanian, Trinobant !  
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly  
    meditating,  
There I heard them in the darkness, at the  
    mystical ceremony,  
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible  
    prophetesses,  
“Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of  
    silvery parapets !



## BOADICEA

Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the  
    gathering enemy narrow thee,  
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt  
    be the mighty one yet !  
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds  
    to be celebrated,  
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow  
    illimitable,  
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-  
    blossoming Paradises,  
Thine the North and thine the South and thine  
    the battle-thunder of God,"  
So they chanted : how shall Britain light upon  
    auguries happier ?  
So they chanted in the darkness, and there  
    cometh a victory now.

    ' Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Cori-  
        tanian, Trinobant !  
Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of  
    liberty,  
Me they seized and me they tortured, me they  
    lash'd and humiliated,  
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian  
    violators !  
See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in  
    ignominy !  
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood  
    to be satiated.

## BOÄDICEA

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony  
Cámulodúne !  
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the  
flourishing territory,  
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-  
ringleted Britoness—  
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted,  
inexorable.  
Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout Coritanian,  
Trinobant,  
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry  
precipitously  
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the  
smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.  
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of  
Cúnobelíne !  
There they drank in cups of emerald, there at  
tables of ebony lay,  
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender  
effeminacy.  
There they dwelt and there they rioted ; there—  
there—they dwell no more.  
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the  
works of the statuary,  
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold  
it abominable,  
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and  
voluptuousness,  
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd  
and humiliated,

## BOÄDICEA

Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the  
brains of the little one out,  
Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers,  
trample them under us.'

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily  
charioted,  
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling  
glances lioness-like,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her  
fierce volubility.  
Till her people all around the royal chariot  
agitated,  
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous  
lineäments,  
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they  
shiver in January,  
Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and  
blanch on the precipices,  
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak  
on a promontory.  
So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous  
adversaries  
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with  
rapid unanimous hand,  
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless  
avarice,  
Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter  
tremulously,

## BOÄDICEA

Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy  
fainted away.

Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny  
buds.

Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudi-  
nous agonies.

Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a  
valorous legionary,

Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London,  
Verulam, Cámulodúne.

## IN QUANTITY

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

*Hexameters and Pentameters*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music  
of Homer !

No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.

When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses,  
in England ?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our  
Helicon ?

Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave  
us,

Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

## IN QUANTITY

MILTON

*Alcaics*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,  
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for ages ;  
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,  
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrëan  
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—  
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
Where some refulgent sunset of India  
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

## IN QUANTITY

### *Hendecasyllabics*

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,  
Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without a welcome,  
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me  
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—  
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—  
As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

## SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

So Hector spake ; the Trojans roar'd applause ;  
Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke,  
And each beside his chariot bound his own ;  
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine  
And bread from out the houses brought, and  
heap'd

Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain  
Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.

And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup> of war  
Sat glorying ; many a fire before them blazed :

As when in heaven the stars about the moon  
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,

And every height comes out, and jutting peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens

Break open to their highest, and all the stars  
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart :

So many a fire between the ships and stream  
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,

A thousand on the plain ; and close by each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;

And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,  
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

*Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge.





THE WINDOW;  
OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days ; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

A. TENNYSON.

*December, 1870.*

## THE WINDOW

### ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly !  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down on the  
plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye !  
Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her window pane,  
When the winds are up in the morning ?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows that cannot  
be still,  
All running on one way to the home of my  
love,  
You are all running on, and I stand on the slope  
of the hill,  
And the winds are up in the morning !

Follow, follow the chase !  
And my thoughts are as quick and as quick,  
ever on, on, on.

## THE WINDOW

O lights, are you flying over her sweet little  
face ?  
And my heart is there before you are come, and  
gone,  
When the winds are up in the morning !

Follow them down the slope !  
And I follow them down to the window-pane of  
my dear,  
And it brightens and darkens and brightens  
like my hope,  
And it darkens and brightens and darkens like  
my fear,  
And the winds are up in the morning.

## AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine !  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
Kiss, kiss ; and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine ?  
Rose, rose and clematis,

## THE WINDOW

Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
Dropt, a flower.

## GONE

Gone !  
Gone, till the end of the year,  
Gone, and the light gone with her, and left me  
in shadow here !  
Gone—flitted away,  
Taken the stars from the night and the sun from  
the day !  
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a storm in  
the air !  
Flown to the east or the west, flitted I know not  
where !  
Down in the south is a flash and a groan : she is  
there ! she is there !

## WINTER

The frost is here,  
And fuel is dear,  
And woods are sear,  
And fires burn clear,  
And frost is here  
And has bitten the heel of the going year.

## THE WINDOW

Bite, frost, bite !

You roll up away from the light

The blue wood-louse, and the plump dormouse,

And the bees are still'd, and the flies are kill'd,

And you bite far into the heart of the house,

But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite !

The woods are all the searer,

The fuel is all the dearer,

The fires are all the clearer,

My spring is all the nearer,

You have bitten into the heart of the earth,

But not into mine.

## SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song

Flying here and there,

Birds' song and birds' love,

And you with gold for hair !

Birds' song and birds' love,

Passing with the weather,

Men's song and men's love,

To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,

And women's love and men's !

And you my wren with a crown of gold,

You my queen of the wrens !

## THE WINDOW

You the queen of the wrens—  
We'll be birds of a feather,  
I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
And all in a nest together.

## THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy ?  
Fine little hands, fine little feet—  
Dewy blue eye.  
Shall I write to her ? shall I go ?  
Ask her to marry me by and by ?  
Somebody said that she'd say no ;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face ?  
Ay or no, from shy of the shy ?  
Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
Fly ;  
Fly to the light in the valley below—  
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye :  
Somebody said that she'd say no ;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay !



## THE WINDOW

### NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and the rain !

Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?

And never a glimpse of her window pane !

And I may die but the grass will grow,  
And the grass will grow when I am gone,  
And the wet west wind and the world will go on.  
Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,

No is trouble and cloud and storm,

Ay is life for a hundred years,

No will push me down to the worm,  
And when I am there and dead and gone,  
The wet west wind and the world will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the wet !

Wet west wind how you blow, you blow !

And never a line from my lady yet !

Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?

Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
The wet west wind and the world may go on.

### NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,

Take my love, for love will come,

Love will come but once a life.

Winds are loud and winds will pass !

Spring is here with leaf and grass :

Take my love and be my wife.

## THE WINDOW

After-loves of maids and men  
Are but dainties drest again :  
Love me now, you'll love me then :  
Love can love but once a life.

## THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,  
Claspt on her seal, my sweet !  
Must I take you and break you,  
Two little hands that meet ?  
I must take you, and break you,  
And loving hands must part—  
Take, take—break, break—  
Break—you may break my heart.  
Faint heart never won—  
Break, break, and all's done.

## AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,  
Be merry on earth as you never were merry  
before,  
Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,  
And merry for ever and ever, and one day  
more.

Why ?  
For it's easy to find a rhyme.

## THE WINDOW

Look, look, how he flits,  
The fire-crown'd king of the wrens, from out  
of the pine !  
Look how they tumble the blossom, the mad  
little tits !  
' Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo ! ' was ever a May so fine ?  
Why ?  
For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
O merry the linnet and dove,  
And swallow and sparrow and throstle, and  
have your desire !  
O merry my heart, you have gotten the wings  
of love,  
And flit like the king of the wrens with a  
crown of fire.  
Why ?  
For it's ay ay, ay ay.

## WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes,  
Time slips away.  
Sun sets, moon sets,  
Love, fix a day.

' A year hence, a year hence.'  
' We shall both be gray.'  
' A month hence, a month hence.'  
' Far, far away.'

## THE WINDOW

‘A week hence, a week hence.’

‘Ah, the long delay.’

‘Wait a little, wait a little,  
You shall fix a day.’

‘To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
And that’s an age away.’

Blaze upon her window, sun,  
And honour all the day.

## MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,

You send a flash to the sun.

Here is the golden close of love,

All my wooing is done.

Oh, the woods and the meadows,

Woods where we hid from the wet,  
Stiles where we stay’d to be kind,

Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale

You flash and lighten afar,

For this is the golden morning of love,

And you are his morning star.

Flash, I am coming, I come,

By meadow and stile and wood,

Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,

Into my heart and my blood !

## THE WINDOW

Heart, are you great enough  
For a love that never tires ?  
O heart, are you great enough for love ?  
I have heard of thorns and briers.  
Over the thorns and briers,  
Over the meadows and stiles,  
Over the world to the end of it  
Flash for a million miles.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII



# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.



## IN MEMORIAM

Our little systems have their day ;  
    They have their day and cease to be :  
    They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
    For knowledge is of things we see ;  
    And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
    But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
    That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
    We mock thee when we do not fear :  
    But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
    What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
    For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
    Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
    I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

## IN MEMORIAM

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
    Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
    Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

### I

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
    To one clear harp in divers tones,  
    That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
    And find in loss a gain to match ?  
    Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
    Let darkness keep her raven gloss :  
    Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
    The long result of love, and boast,  
    ‘ Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn.’

## IN MEMORIAM

### II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock ;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

### III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip ?

## IN MEMORIAM

‘The stars,’ she whispers, ‘blindly run ;  
A web is wov’n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun :

‘And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands.’

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good ;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

### IV

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should’st fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
‘What is it makes me beat so low ?’

## IN MEMORIAM

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
    Some pleasure from thine early years.  
    Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
    All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
    With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
‘ Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.’

### v

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
    To put in words the grief I feel ;  
    For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
    A use in measured language lies ;  
    The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
    Like coarsest clothes against the cold :  
    But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## IN MEMORIAM

### VI

One writes, that ‘Other friends remain,’  
That ‘Loss is common to the race’—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more :  
Too common ! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe’er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still’d the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow’d,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well ;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Expecting still his advent home ;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'  
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking 'this will please him best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
And with the thought her colour burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
And what to me remains of good ?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

## IN MEMORIAM

### VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

### VIII

A happy lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :



## IN MEMORIAM

So find I every pleasant spot  
    In which we two were wont to meet,  
    The field, the chamber and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
    In those deserted walks, may find  
    A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
    O my forsaken heart, with thee  
    And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
    I go to plant it on his tomb,  
    That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
    Saiest the placid ocean-plains  
    With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

## IN MEMORIAM

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain ; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

x

I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night :  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

## IN MEMORIAM

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

## IN MEMORIAM

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
    I leave this mortal ark behind,  
    A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
    And reach the glow of southern skies,  
    And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; ‘ Comes he thus, my friend ?  
    Is this the end of all my care ? ’  
    And circle moaning in the air :  
‘ Is this the end ?    Is this the end ? ’

And forward dart again, and play  
    About the prow, and back return  
    To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

### XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
    A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
    And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
    A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
    And, where warm hands have prest and  
        closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
    An awful thought, a life removed,  
    The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
    I do not suffer in a dream ;  
    For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
    And glance about the approaching sails,  
    As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

### XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
    That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
    And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

## IN MEMORIAM

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## xv

To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day :  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

## IN MEMORIAM

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI

What words are these have fall'n from me ?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?



## IN MEMORIAM

Or doth she only seem to take  
    The touch of change in calm or storm ;  
    But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
    Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?  
    Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
    And staggers blindly ere she sink ?  
    And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man  
    Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
    And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan ?

## XVII

Thou comest, much wept for : such a breeze  
    Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
    Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

## IN MEMORIAM

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

## IN MEMORIAM

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

## IN MEMORIAM

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
    The salt sea-water passes by,  
    And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
    And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
    When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
    Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
    My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

### XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
    That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
    Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
    And weep the fulness from the mind :  
    ‘ It will be hard,’ they say, ‘ to find  
Another service such as this.’

## IN MEMORIAM

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win ;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
'How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.'

### XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak :  
'This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

## IN MEMORIAM

Another answers, ' Let him be,  
    He loves to make parade of pain,  
    That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth : ' Is this an hour  
    For private sorrow's barren song,  
    When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

' A time to sicken and to swoon,  
    When Science reaches forth her arms  
    To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
    Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
    I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,  
    For now her little ones have ranged ;  
    And one is sad ; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXII

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think, that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where it ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb ;  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with  
Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood ;



## IN MEMORIAM

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

### XXIV

And was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say ?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so great ?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief ?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far ;  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein ?

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

### XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way ;  
I with it ; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

## IN MEMORIAM

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

### XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

## IN MEMORIAM

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

### XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

## IN MEMORIAM

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

### XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and game and jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time ? They too will die.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave  
    The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
    A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
    We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
    Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
    We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
    And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
    We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
    A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
    Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
    ‘They rest,’ we said, ‘their sleep is sweet,’  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

## IN MEMORIAM

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : ‘ They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

‘ Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather’d power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.’

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

### XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary’s house return’d,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn’d  
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

‘ Where wert thou, brother, those four days ? ’  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

## IN MEMORIAM

From every house the neighbours met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
He told it not ; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

### XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.



## IN MEMORIAM

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

### XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good :  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

### XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow house,  
'The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust' :

## IN MEMORIAM

Might I not say ? ‘ Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive ’ :  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
‘ The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die.’

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case ? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush’d the grape,  
And bask’d and batten’d in the woods.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
    Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
    We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
    Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
    When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
    With human hands the creed of creeds  
    In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
    Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
    And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

### XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow :  
    'Thou pratest here where thou art least ;  
    This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

## IN MEMORIAM

‘ Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.’

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
‘ I am not worthy ev’n to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

‘ For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ;

‘ But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

‘ I murmur’d, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp’d in truth reveal’d ;  
And loiter’d in the master’s field,  
And darken’d sanctities with song.’

## IN MEMORIAM

### XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
    Tho' always under alter'd skies  
    The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
    The herald melodies of spring,  
    But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
    Survive in spirits render'd free,  
    Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

### XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
    And answering now my random stroke  
    With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
    To thee too comes the golden hour  
    When flower is feeling after flower ;  
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

## IN MEMORIAM

And darkening the dark graves of men,—  
What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
And passes into gloom again.

### XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each ;

## IN MEMORIAM

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In those great offices that suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low ;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.



## IN MEMORIAM

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be—  
That I could wing my will with might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death ;  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to thee,  
Thro' all the secular to-be, -  
But evermore a life behind.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim :  
    He still outstript me in the race ;  
    It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
    And he the much-beloved again,  
    A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
    That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
    When one that loves but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows ?

### XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
    And every spirit's folded bloom  
    Thro' all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
    Bare of the body, might it last,  
    And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower :

## IN MEMORIAM

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
    So that still garden of the souls  
    In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole  
    As when he loved me here in Time,  
    And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

### XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead ?  
    For here the man is more and more ;  
    But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
    And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
    Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
    (If Death so taste Lethean springs),  
    May some dim touch of earthly things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

## IN MEMORIAM

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
    O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;  
    My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

### XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,  
    What time his tender palm is prest  
    Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that 'this is I' :

But as he grows he gathers much,  
    And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'  
    And finds 'I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind  
    From whence clear memory may begin,  
    As thro' the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
    Which else were fruitless of their due,  
    Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,  
The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;  
The fruitful hours of still increase ;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far ;  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

### XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

## IN MEMORIAM

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
    Eternal form shall still divide  
    The eternal soul from all beside ;  
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
    Enjoying each the other's good :  
    What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth ? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
    Before the spirits fade away,  
    Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
'Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light.'

### XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
    Were taken to be such as closed  
    Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;  
    She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
    What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love :

## IN MEMORIAM

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

### XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

## IN MEMORIAM

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
    Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
    Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

### L

Be near me when my light is low,  
    When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
    And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
    Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust ;  
    And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
    And men the flies of latter spring,  
    That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
    To point the term of human strife,  
    And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.



## IN MEMORIAM

### LI

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith ?  
There must be wisdom with great Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

### LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

## IN MEMORIAM

‘ Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,’  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
‘ Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

‘ What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears ?  
What record ? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

‘ So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash’d with flecks of sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather’d in,  
When Time hath sunder’d shell from pearl.’

### LIII

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live ?

## IN MEMORIAM

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
    For life outliving heats of youth,  
    Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
    For fear divine Philosophy  
    Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

### LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
    Will be the final goal of ill,  
    To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
    That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
    Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
    That not a moth with vain desire  
    Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

## IN MEMORIAM

Behold, we know not anything ;  
    I can but trust that good shall fall  
    At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
    An infant crying in the night :  
    An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.

### LV

The wish, that of the living whole  
    No life may fail beyond the grave,  
    Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
    That Nature lends such evil dreams ?  
    So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
    Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
    And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

## IN MEMORIAM

I falter where I firmly trod,  
    And falling with my weight of cares  
    Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
    And gather dust and chaff, and call  
    To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

### LVI

‘So careful of the type?’ but no.  
    From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone  
    She cries, ‘A thousand types are gone :  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

‘Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
    I bring to life, I bring to death :  
    The spirit does but mean the breath :  
I know no more.’ And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
    Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
    Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

## IN MEMORIAM

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless !  
What hope of answer, or redress ?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII

Peace ; come away : the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song :  
Peace ; come away : we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly : let us go.

## IN MEMORIAM

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are pale ;  
But half my life I leave behind :  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined ;  
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
And ' Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,  
' Adieu, adieu ' for evermore

### LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell :  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

## IN MEMORIAM

The high Muse answer'd : ' Wherefore grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

### LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine.



## IN MEMORIAM

### LX

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
    My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
    Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
    She finds the baseness of her lot,  
    Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
    She sighs amid her narrow days,  
    Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
    And tease her till the day draws by :  
    At night she weeps, ‘ How vain am I !  
How should he love a thing so low ? ’

### LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,  
    Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
    With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time ;

## IN MEMORIAM

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
    How dimly character'd and slight,  
    How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
    Where thy first form was made a man ;  
    I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

### LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
    Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
    Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
    When he was little more than boy,  
    On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
    His other passion wholly dies,  
    Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

### LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
' Does my old friend remember me ? '

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With ' Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

### LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
    Whose jest among his friends is free,  
    Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
    For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
    His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

### LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
    I know that in thy place of rest  
    By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
    As slowly steals a silver flame  
    Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
    From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
    And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

## IN MEMORIAM

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

### LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath ;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt ;

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost :  
The streets were black with smoke and  
frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
I found an angel of the night ;  
The voice was low, the look was bright ;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.



## IN MEMORIAM

### LXX

I cannot see the features right,  
    When on the gloom I strive to paint  
    The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
    A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
    A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
    And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
    Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will  
    I hear a wizard music roll,  
    And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

### LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
    And madness, thou hast forged at last  
    A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

## IN MEMORIAM

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

### LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane ?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
    With thy quick tears that make the rose  
    Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
    Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
    A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;  
    Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
    When the dark hand struck down thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
    Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
    And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
    Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;  
    Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
    So little done, such things to be,  
    How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
    The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath :  
    I curse not nature, no, nor death ;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man trod  
    Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
    What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
    Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
    And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

### LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
    To those that watch it more and more,  
    A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out—to some one of his race :

## IN MEMORIAM

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

### LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

## IN MEMORIAM

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

### LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

## IN MEMORIAM

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

### LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks,  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave  
    The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
    The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
    No wing of wind the region swept,  
    But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
    Again our ancient games had place,  
    The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?  
    No single tear, no mark of pain :  
    O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !  
    No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
    Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.



## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXIX

‘More than my brothers are to me,’—  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in Nature’s mint ;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl’d  
Thro’ all his eddying coves ; the same  
All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer’d vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn’d,  
Ere childhood’s flaxen ringlet turn’d  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,  
    That holy Death ere Arthur died  
    Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
    The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
    A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
    I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
    He bears the burthen of the weeks  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
    And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
    Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

### LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,  
    ‘ My love shall now no further range ;  
    There cannot come a mellower change,  
For now is love mature in ear.’

## IN MEMORIAM

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
What end is here to my complaint ?  
This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
‘ More years had made me love thee more.’

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
‘ My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-heat.’

### LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death  
For changes wrought on form and face ;  
No lower life that earth’s embrace  
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks ;  
And these are but the shatter’d stalks,  
Or ruin’d chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth :  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

## IN MEMORIAM

For this alone on Death I wreak  
    The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
    He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.

### LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
    O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
    Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
    Thy sweetness from its proper place ?  
    Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
    The little speedwell's darling blue,  
    Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
    Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
    That longs to burst a frozen bud  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone  
    The life that had been thine below,  
    And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
    A central warmth diffusing bliss  
    In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
    For now the day was drawing on,  
    When thou should'st link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee ;  
    But that remorseless iron hour  
    Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
    To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
    I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
    Thy partner in the flowery walk  
    Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

## IN MEMORIAM

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
    The lips of men with honest praise,  
    And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
    And all the train of bounteous hours  
    Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
    Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
    Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
    As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
    And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
    And He that died in Holy Land  
    Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?  
    Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
    The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

## IN MEMORIAM

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

## IN MEMORIAM

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little  
worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine ;



## IN MEMORIAM

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
    With gifts of grace, that might express  
    All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
    To works of weakness, but I find  
    An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
    That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
    Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
    For other friends that once I met ;  
    Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
    To mourn for any overmuch ;  
    I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
    Eternal, separate from fears :  
    The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this :

## IN MEMORIAM

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak  
‘ Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

‘ I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more.’

And I, ‘ Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free ?  
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain ?’

And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
‘ ’Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all.’

## IN MEMORIAM

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
Or so methinks the dead would say ;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours ?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

## IN MEMORIAM

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
    Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
    The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

### LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
    That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
    Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
    Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
    And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
    The full new life that feeds thy breath  
    Throughout my frame, till Doubt and  
    Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
    On leagues of odour streaming far,  
    To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls  
    In which of old I wore the gown ;  
    I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes  
    The storm their high-built organs make,  
    And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophet blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
    The measured pulse of racing oars  
    Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
    The same, but not the same ; and last  
    Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :  
    I linger'd ; all within was noise  
    Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string ;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## IN MEMORIAM

### LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings ;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

### LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

## IN MEMORIAM

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
    He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
    They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
    Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
    To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
    The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
    The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
    About him, heart and ear were fed  
    To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
    A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
    Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
    Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
    And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods ;



## IN MEMORIAM

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For ' ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

' And merge ' he said ' in form and gloss  
The picturesque of man and man.'  
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## IN MEMORIAM

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands ;  
The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

## IN MEMORIAM

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
    Whatever change the years have wrought,  
    I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

### XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
    And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
    Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
    Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
    The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
    May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
    Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
    But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
    Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## IN MEMORIAM

### XCII

If any vision should reveal  
    Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
    As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
    Together in the days behind,  
    I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
    A fact within the coming year ;  
    And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
    But spiritual presentiments,  
    And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

### XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
    No spirit ever brake the band  
    That stays him from the native land  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

## IN MEMORIAM

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name ;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

### XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would  
hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

## IN MEMORIAM

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits,  
They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

### XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

## IN MEMORIAM

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
Of that glad year which once had been,  
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

## IN MEMORIAM

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said



## IN MEMORIAM

‘The dawn, the dawn,’ and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

### XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch’d a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather’d strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them : thus he came at length

## IN MEMORIAM

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

### XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

## IN MEMORIAM

Their love has never past away ;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss :  
She knows not what his greatness is,  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
' I cannot understand : I love.'

## IN MEMORIAM

### XCVIII

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That City. All her splendour seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,

## IN MEMORIAM

That not in any mother town  
    With statelier progress to and fro  
    The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
    He told me, lives in any crowd,  
    When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
    And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
    The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

### XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
    So loud with voices of the birds,  
    So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
    On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
    By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
    A song that slights the coming care,  
    And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
    To myriads on the genial earth,  
    Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,  
    Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
    To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

### C

I climb the hill : from end to end  
    Of all the landscape underneath,  
    I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
    Or low morass and whispering reed,  
    Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
    That hears the latest linnet trill,  
    Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
    Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
    To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
    And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
    And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
    The tender blossom flutter down,  
    Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
    Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
    And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
    The brook shall babble down the plain,  
    At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
    And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
    Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
    A fresh association blow,  
    And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills  
    His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
    And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII

We leave the well-beloved place  
    Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
    The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.



## IN MEMORIAM

We go, but ere we go from home,  
    As down the garden-walks I move,  
    Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung  
    Long since its matin song, and heard  
    The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
    Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
    With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
    And each prefers his separate claim,  
    Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
    To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;  
    They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CIII

On that last night before we went  
    From out the doors where I was bred,  
    I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
    And maidens with me : distant hills  
    From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
    They sang of what is wise and good  
    And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
    The shape of him I loved, and love  
    For ever : then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
    They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
    To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

## IN MEMORIAM

And on by many a level mead,  
    And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
    We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
    And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
    The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
    And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb ;  
    I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,  
    And one would chant the history  
    Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
    Began to foam, and we to draw  
    From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
    But thrice as large as man he bent  
    To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck :

## IN MEMORIAM

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
    Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :  
    ' We served thee here,' they said, ' so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind ? '

So rapt I was, they could not win  
    An answer from my lips, but he  
    Replying, ' Enter likewise ye  
And go with us ' : they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
    A music out of sheet and shroud,  
    We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

### CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;  
    The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
    A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
    That wakens at this hour of rest  
    A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

## IN MEMORIAM

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave :  
This laurel, let this holly stand :  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows :  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

## IN MEMORIAM

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

### CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
The year is dying in the night ;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
The year is going, let him go ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

## IN MEMORIAM

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more ;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife ;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times ;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite ;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
    A bitter day that early sank  
    Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
    To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
    The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
    To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
    Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
    To darken on the rolling brine  
    That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
    To make a solid core of heat ;  
    Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;



## IN MEMORIAM

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

### CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns ?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry ;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace.  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;

## IN MEMORIAM

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on : if they look'd in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

### CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
    But mine the love that will not tire,  
    And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

### CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down  
    Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
    To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
    His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
    Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,  
    To whom a thousand memories call,  
    Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
    Each office of the social hour  
    To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

### CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

## IN MEMORIAM

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

### CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

## IN MEMORIAM

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

### CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty ? May she mix  
With men and prosper ! Who shall fix  
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place ;  
She is the second, not the first.

## IN MEMORIAM

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain ; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

### CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.



## IN MEMORIAM

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

### CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

## IN MEMORIAM

Not all regret : the face will shine  
    Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
    And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
    For days of happy commune dead ;  
    Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

### CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this  
    To hold me from my proper place,  
    A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
    Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
    And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
    And every span of shade that steals,  
    And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth ;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore.

## IN MEMORIAM

But iron dug from central gloom,  
    And heated hot with burning fears,  
    And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
    The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
    Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

### CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
    So quickly, not as one that weeps  
    I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
    Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
    A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
    And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
    And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath :  
    I think we are not wholly brain,  
    Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
    Let Science prove we are, and then  
    What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
    Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
    His action like the greater ape,  
But I was *born* to other things.

### CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
    And ready, thou, to die with him,  
    Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
    The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
    Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

## IN MEMORIAM

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

### CXXII

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

## IN MEMORIAM

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

### CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

## IN MEMORIAM

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

### CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless ;  
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;  
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice 'believe no more'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'



## IN MEMORIAM

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
    But that blind clamour made me wise ;  
    Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again  
    What is, and no man understands ;  
    And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

### CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,  
    Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
    Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;  
    She did but look through dimmer eyes ;  
    Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,  
    He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
    And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there ;

## IN MEMORIAM

Abiding with me till I sail  
    To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
    And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

### CXXVI

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
    And in his presence I attend  
    To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
    And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
    Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
    Who moves about from place to place,  
    And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

### CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
    Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
    Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

## IN MEMORIAM

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

### CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

## IN MEMORIAM

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade ;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new ;  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil cöoperant to an end.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
    So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
    O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;  
    Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;  
    Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;  
    Loved deeplier, darklier understood ;  
    Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

### CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;  
    I hear thee where the waters run ;  
    Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
    But tho' I seem in star and flower  
    To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less :

## IN MEMORIAM

My love involves the love before ;  
    My love is vaster passion now ;  
    Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
    I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
    I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

### CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure  
    When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
    Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
    A voice as unto him that hears,  
    A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
    The truths that never can be proved  
    Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

## IN MEMORIAM

O true and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house ; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years : they went and  
came,  
Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

## IN MEMORIAM

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon ?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride ;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;



## IN MEMORIAM

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The ' wilt thou ' answer'd, and again  
The ' wilt thou ' ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet ' I will ' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave,  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

## IN MEMORIAM

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses wait ;  
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

## IN MEMORIAM

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

## IN MEMORIAM

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.



# MAUD; A MONODRAMA



# MAUD; A MONODRAMA

## PART I

### I

### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little  
     wood,  
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-  
     red heath,  
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror  
     of blood,  
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers  
     'Death.'

### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body  
     was found,  
 His who had given me life—O father ! O God !  
     was it well ?—  
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented  
     into the ground :  
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him when  
     he fell.



## MAUD

### III

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a  
vast speculation had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever  
wann'd with despair,  
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken  
worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands  
drove thro' the air.

### IV

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair  
were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a  
whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock  
on my heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the  
shuddering night.

### V

Villainy somewhere ! whose ? One says, we are  
villains all.  
Not he : his honest fame should at least by me  
be maintained :  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate  
and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us  
flaccid and drain'd.

## MAUD

### VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace ? we  
    have made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not  
    its own ;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better  
    or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his  
    own hearthstone ?

### VII

But these are the days of advance, the works of the  
    men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a  
    tradesman's ware or his word ?  
Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I think, and  
    that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the  
    sword.

### VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not ? I have neither  
    hope nor trust ;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face  
    as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die : who knows ? we  
    are ashes and dust.

## MAUD

### IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the  
days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together,  
each sex, like swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not  
all men lie ;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes !—but a company  
forges the wine.

### X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's  
head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the  
trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the  
poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means  
of life,

### XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous  
centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the  
moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last  
gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson  
lights.

## MAUD

### XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a  
burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's  
bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by  
land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a  
hundred thrones.

### XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round  
by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-  
decker out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would  
leap from his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his  
cheating yardwand, home.——

### XIV

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in  
his mood?  
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself  
down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, never-  
more to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched  
swindler's lie?

## MAUD

### XV

Would there be sorrow for *me* ? there was *love* in  
the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste  
to the grave—  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he  
would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he  
used to rave.

### XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of  
the moor and the main.  
Why should I stay ? can a sweeter chance ever  
come to me here ?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the  
nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the  
pit and the fear ?

### XVII

Workmen up at the Hall !—they are coming  
back from abroad ;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a  
millionaire :  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular  
beauty of Maud ;  
I play'd with the girl when a child ; she promised  
then to be fair.

## MAUD

### XVIII

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles  
and childish escapes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy  
of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my  
father dangled the grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced  
darling of all,—

### XIX

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She  
may bring me a curse.  
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will  
let me alone.  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman  
or man be the worse.  
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may  
pipe to his own.

### II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may  
find it at last!  
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither  
savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her  
carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where  
is the fault?

## MAUD

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not  
to be seen)  
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it  
had not been  
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's  
defect of the rose,  
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe,  
too full,  
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a  
sensitive nose,  
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least  
little touch of spleen.

### III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly  
meek,  
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly  
was drown'd,  
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead  
on the cheek,  
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom  
profound ;  
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a  
transient wrong  
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as  
pale as before  
Growing and fading and growing upon me  
without a sound,

## MAUD

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half  
the night long  
Growing and fading and growing, till I could  
bear it no more,  
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark  
garden ground,  
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung  
shipwrecking roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd  
down by the wave,  
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer,  
and found  
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his  
grave.

## IV

### I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded  
lime  
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore  
cannot I be  
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful  
season bland,  
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of  
a softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent  
of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of  
the land?



## MAUD

### II

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how  
quiet and small !  
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip,  
scandal, and spite ;  
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies  
as a Czar ;  
And here on the landward side, by a red rock,  
glimmers the Hall ;  
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass  
like a light ;  
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my  
leading star !

### III

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled  
head of the race ?  
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to  
her brother I bow'd :  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the  
moor ;  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her  
beautiful face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in  
being so proud ;  
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am  
nameless and poor.

## MAUD

### IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to  
slander and steal ;  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a  
stoic, or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its  
way :  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher  
can heal ;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow  
spear'd by the shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world  
of plunder and prey.

### V

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty  
fair in her flower ;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an  
unseen hand at a game  
That pushes us off from the board, and others  
ever succeed ?  
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here  
for an hour ;  
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at  
a brother's shame ;  
However we brave it out, we men are a little  
breed.

## MAUD

### VI

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master  
of Earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and his river  
billowing ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's  
crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe  
for his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone to the  
making of man :  
He now is first, but is he the last ? is he not too  
base ?

### VII

The man of science himself is fonder of glory,  
and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded  
and poor ;  
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into  
folly and vice.  
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temper-  
ate brain ;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn  
it, were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a  
garden of spice.

## MAUD

### VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid  
by the veil.  
Who knows the ways of the world, how God  
will bring them about ?  
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world  
is wide.  
Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I shriek if a  
Hungary fail ?  
Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or  
with knout ?  
*I* have not made the world, and He that made it  
will guide.

### IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet wood-  
land ways,  
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace  
be my lot,  
Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the  
hubbub of lies ;  
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that  
are ever hissing dispraise  
Because their natures are little, and, whether he  
heed it or not,  
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud  
of poisonous flies.

## MAUD

### X

And most of all would I flee from the cruel  
madness of love,  
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measure-  
less ill.  
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all  
unmeet for a wife.  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image  
in marble above ;  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about  
at your will ;  
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the  
lilies of life.

### V

#### I

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall !  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call !  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

## MAUD

### II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

### III

Silence, beautiful voice !  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still ! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

### VI

#### I

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
I had fancied it would be fair.

## MAUD

### II

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet ?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet,  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

### III

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame ;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

### IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

## MAUD

### V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five ?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

### VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.



## MAUD

### VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

### VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and good ?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## MAUD

### IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand ?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

### X

I have play'd with her when a child ;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII

### I

Did I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where ?  
Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm-chair ?

## MAUD

### II

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me ;  
' Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty : so let it be.'

### III

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night ?

### IV

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me ;  
' Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty : so let it be.'

### VIII

She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone ;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own ;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer

## MAUD

The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone ;  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd  
' No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

## IX

I was walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone :  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
Then returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

## X

### I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head ?

## MAUD

Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## II

What, has he found my jewel out ?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he :  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought ? what is it he cannot buy ?

## MAUD

And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

### III

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,  
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well :  
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,  
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings  
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war ! can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence ?  
Put down the passions that make earth Hell !  
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear ;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

### IV

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy !

## MAUD

I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

### V

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

### VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be !

### XI

#### I

O let the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet ;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## MAUD

### II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me ;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

### XII

#### I

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

#### II

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

#### III

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.



## MAUD

### IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately ;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

### V

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour !  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

### VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

### VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?  
One is come to woo her.

# MAUD

## VIII

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII

### I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret ?  
That a calamity hard to be borne ?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride !  
I past him, I was crossing his lands ;  
He stood on the path a little aside ;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

### II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship ;  
But while I past he was humming an air,

## MAUD

Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

### III

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
That old man never comes to his place :  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue ;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin :  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## MAUD

### IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

### XIV

#### I

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate ;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

#### II

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate :  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid

## MAUD

On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to  
glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my  
side,  
There were but a step to be made.

### III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold ;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

### IV

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood ;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I  
beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn ;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but  
sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the  
sleep of death.

## MAUD

### XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if *I* be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much to fear ;  
But if *I* be dear to some one else,  
Then I should be to myself more dear.  
Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
If I be dear,  
If I be dear to some one else.

### XVI

#### I

This lump of earth has left his estate  
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
And so that he find what he went to seek,  
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown  
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week :  
But this is the day when I must speak,  
And I see my Oread coming down,  
O this is the day !  
O beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way ;  
Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,

## MAUD

And dream of her beauty with tender dread,  
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest  
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,  
To know her beauty might half undo it.  
I know it the one bright thing to save  
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

### II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
Dare I bid her abide by her word ?  
Should I love her so well if she  
Had given her word to a thing so low ?  
Shall I love her as well if she  
Can break her word were it even for me ?  
I trust that it is not so.

### III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
For I must tell her before we part,  
I must tell her, or die.

# MAUD

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
    From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
    Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
    Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
    And a rose her mouth  
When the happy Yes  
    Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
    Over glowing ships ;  
Over blowing seas,  
    Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
    Blush it thro' the West ;  
Till the red man dance  
    By his red cedar-tree,  
And the red man's babe  
    Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
    Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
    Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
    Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
    And a rose her mouth.



# MAUD

## XVIII

### I

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

### II

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes once more ;  
But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

### III

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious  
    East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed

## MAUD

With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom  
she came.

### IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

### V

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

## MAUD

### VI

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

### VII

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death ?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?  
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more  
dear.'

### VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,

## MAUD

And died to live, long as my pulses play ;  
But now by this my love has closed her sight  
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace affright !  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell ;  
It is but for a little space I go :  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow  
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright ?  
*I* have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can  
tell,  
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so :  
Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

### I

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

## MAUD

### II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and mine :  
For who was left to watch her but I ?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

### III

I trust that I did not talk  
To gentle Maud in our walk  
(For often in lonely wanderings  
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
But I trust that I did not talk,  
Not touch on her father's sin :  
I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek  
When it slowly grew so thin,  
That I felt she was slowly dying  
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt :  
For how often I caught her with eyes all  
    wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
A world of trouble within !

## MAUD

### IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share her heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn :  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.  
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.  
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

### V

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet :  
And none of us thought of a something beyond,  
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,  
As it were a duty done to the tomb,

## MAUD

To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;  
And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

### VI

But then what a flint is he !  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before ;  
And this was what had redden'd her cheek  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

### VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay

## MAUD

Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

### VIII

Kind ? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind ? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind ; why let it be so :  
For shall not Maud have her will ?

### IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay ;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours ;  
O then, what then shall I say ?—  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet !



## MAUD

### X

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry ;  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

### XX

#### I

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that *I* tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy ;  
The Sultan, as we name him,—  
She did not wish to blame him—  
But he vexed her and perplexed her  
With his worldly talk and folly :  
Was it gentle to reprove her  
For stealing out of view  
From a little lazy lover  
Who but claims her as his due ?  
Or for chilling his caresses  
By the coldness of her manners,

## MAUD

Nay, the plainness of her dresses :  
Now I know her but in two,  
Nor can pronounce upon it  
If one should ask me whether  
The habit, hat, and feather,  
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer ;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

### II

But to-morrow, if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squirelings near ;  
And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

### III

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance  
For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## MAUD

### IV

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over ;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

### XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea ;  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee

## MAUD

(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night.'

### XXII

#### I

Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the rose is blown.

#### II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

## MAUD

### III

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

### IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone ?  
She is weary of dance and play.'  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day ;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

### V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
For one that will never be thine ?  
But mine, but mine,' so I swear to the rose,  
'For ever and ever, mine.'

## MAUD

### VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall ;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

### VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

### VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
Knowing your promise to me ;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## MAUD

### IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

### X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
She is coming, my life, my fate ;  
The red rose cries, ' She is near, she is near ' ;  
And the white rose weeps, ' She is late ' ;  
The larkspur listens, ' I hear, I hear ' ;  
And the lily whispers, ' I wait.'

### XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead ;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

## PART II

### I

### I

'THE fault was mine, the fault was mine'—  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—  
 It is this guilty hand!—  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening land—  
 What is it, that has been done?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
 The fires of Hell and of Hate;  
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
 When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,  
 He came with the babe-faced lord;  
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
 And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
 He fiercely gave me the lie,  
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
 Struck me before the languid fool,



## MAUD

Who was gaping and grinning by :  
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe ;  
For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke  
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,  
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless  
code,

That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?  
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly !'  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood :  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die,  
till I die.

## II

Is it gone ? my pulses beat—  
What was it ? a lying trick of the brain ?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with delu-  
ging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive :

## MAUD

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee  
just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous  
worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust ;  
We are not worthy to live.

## II

### I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## II

What is it ? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## MAUD

### III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world ?

### IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

### V

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,

## MAUD

A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud ?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

### VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;  
An old song vexes my ear ;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

### VII

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still ;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

## MAUD

### VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by !  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought  
It is his mother's hair.

### IX

Who knows if he be dead ?  
Whether I need have fled ?  
Am I guilty of blood ?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
While I am over the sea !  
Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and high,  
Whatever happen to me !  
Me and my harmful love go by ;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die.

## MAUD

### III

Courage, poor heart of stone !  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone :  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply :  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

### IV

#### I

O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again !

#### II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

## MAUD

### III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee :  
Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be.

### IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

### V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

# MAUD

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendour falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet ;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet ;  
She is singing in the meadow  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?  
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.



## MAUD

### VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about !  
'Tis the blot upon the brain  
That *will* show itself without.

### IX

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapours choke  
The great city sounding wide ;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

### X

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## MAUD

### XI

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

### XII

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest'?

### XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me :

## MAUD

Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

### V

#### I

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead !  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,  
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
Only a yard beneath the street,  
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
The hoofs of the horses beat,  
Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,  
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,  
And here beneath it is all as bad,  
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is  
not so ;  
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad ?  
But up and down and to and fro,  
Ever about me the dead men go ;  
And then to hear a dead man chatter  
Is enough to drive one mad.

## MAUD

### II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
They cannot even bury a man ;  
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are  
    gone,  
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read ;  
It is that which makes us loud in the world of  
    the dead ;  
There is none that does his work, not one ;  
A touch of their office might have sufficed,  
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,  
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

### III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
No limit to his distress ;  
And another, a lord of all things, praying  
To his own great self, as I guess ;  
And another, a statesman there, betraying  
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
The case of his patient—all for what ?  
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,  
And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
For it is but a world of the dead.

## MAUD

### IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
For the prophecy given of old  
And then not understood,  
Has come to pass as foretold ;  
Not let any man think for the public good,  
But babble, merely for babble.  
For I never whisper'd a private affair  
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of  
the house ;  
Everything came to be known.  
Who told *him* we were there ?

### V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he  
used to lie ;  
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown  
whelp to crack ;  
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

### VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;  
I know not whether he came in the Hanover  
ship,

## MAUD

But I know that he lies and listens mute  
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :  
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls !  
It is all used up for that.

### VII

Tell him now : she is standing here at my head ;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
He may take her now ; for she never speaks her  
mind,  
But is ever the one thing silent here.  
She is not *of* us, as I divine ;  
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,  
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

### VIII

But I know where a garden grows,  
Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
All made up of the lily and rose  
That blow by night, when the season is good,  
To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood ;  
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride ;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,  
Would he have that hole in his side ?

## MAUD

### IX

But what will the old man say?  
He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;  
Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;  
For what will the old man say  
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit ?

### X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
Then to strike him and lay him low,  
That were a public merit, far,  
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;  
But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
Are scarcely even akin.

### XI

O me, why have they not buried me deep  
          enough ?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?  
Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;

## MAUD

I will cry to the steps above my head  
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will  
    come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.



## PART III

### VI

#### I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
That I come to be grateful at last for a little  
thing :

My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
When the face of night is fair on the dewy  
downs,

And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
That like a silent lightning under the stars  
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of  
the blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming  
wars—

' And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's  
breast.

## MAUD

### II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear  
delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes  
so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing  
bright ;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my  
despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence  
of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

### III

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure  
and true),  
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'

## MAUD

And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

### IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and  
    shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle  
    unroll'd !  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall  
    weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring  
    claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant  
    liar ;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over  
    and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic  
    deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress,  
    flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## MAUD

### v

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like  
a wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we  
are noble still,  
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better  
mind ;  
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at  
the ill ;  
I have felt with my native land, I am one with  
my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom  
assign'd.



IDYLLS OF THE KING  
IN TWELVE BOOKS

‘*Flos Regum Arthurus.*’—JOSEPH OF EXETER.

## DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held them dear,  
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,  
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
 Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
 ' Who revered his conscience as his king ;  
 Whose glory was, redressing human wrong ;  
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it ;  
 Who loved one only and who clave to her—'  
 Her—over all whose realms to their last isle,  
 Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,  
 The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
 Darkening the world. We have lost him : he is  
 gone :

We know him now : all narrow jealousies  
 Are silent ; and we see him as he moved,  
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,  
 With what sublime repression of himself,  
 And in what limits, and how tenderly ;



## DEDICATION

Not swaying to this faction or to that ;  
Not making his high place the lawless perch  
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
For pleasure ; but thro' all this tract of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,  
And blackens every blot : for where is he,  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his ?  
Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons  
Hope more for these than some inheritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
Laborious for her people and her poor—  
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—  
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure ;  
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
Remembering all the beauty of that star  
Which shone so close beside Thee that ye made  
One light together, but has past and leaves  
The Crown a lonely splendour.

## DEDICATION

May all love,  
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,  
The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,  
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
Till God's love set Thee at his side again !

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
 Had one fair daughter, and none other child ;  
 And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
 Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
 Each upon other, wasted all the land ;  
 And still from time to time the heathen host  
 Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.  
 And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,  
 Wherein the beast was ever more and more,  
 But man was less and less, till Arthur came.  
 For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,  
 And after him King Uther fought and died,  
 But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.  
 And after these King Arthur for a space,  
 And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,  
 Drew all their petty princedoms under him,  
 Their king and head, and made a realm, and  
 reign'd.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the beast ;  
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear  
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,  
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.

And ever and anon the wolf would steal  
The children and devour, but now and then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat  
To human sucklings ; and the children, housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat would  
growl,

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like  
men,

Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran  
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,  
And Cæsar's eagle : then his brother king,  
Urien, assail'd him : last a heathen horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with  
blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's heart  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,  
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,  
Tho' not without an uproar made by those  
Who cried, ' He is not Uther's son '—the King  
Sent to him, saying, ' Arise, and help us thou !  
For here between the man and beast we die.'

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,  
But heard the call, and came : and Guinevere  
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass ;  
But since he neither wore on helm or shield  
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his knights,  
And many of these in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,  
One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd  
His tents beside the forest. Then he drave  
The heathen ; after, slew the beast, and fell'd  
The forest, letting in the sun, and made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight  
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm  
Flash'd forth and into war : for most of these,  
Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,  
Made head against him, crying, ' Who is he  
That he should rule us ? who hath proven him  
King Uther's son ? for lo ! we look at him, <sup>11</sup>  
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.  
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King ;  
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere ;  
And thinking as he rode, ' Her father said  
That there between the man and beast they die.  
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side with me ?  
What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,  
O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be join'd  
To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my work  
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm  
Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,  
Then might we live together as one life,  
And reigning with one will in everything  
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,  
And power on this dead world to make it live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the tale—  
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle bright  
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world  
Was all so clear about him, that he saw  
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,  
And even in high day the morning star.  
So when the King had set his banner broad,  
At once from either side, with trumpet-blast,  
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto blood,

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

The long-lanced battle let their horses run.  
And now the Barons and the kings prevail'd,  
And now the King, as here and there that war  
Went swaying ; but the Powers who walk the  
world

Made lightnings and great thunders over him,  
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main might,  
And mightier of his hands with every blow,  
And leading all his knighthood threw the kings  
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
Claudias, and Clariance of Northumberland,  
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice  
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees  
To one who sins, and deems himself alone  
And all the world asleep, they swerved and  
brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the brands  
That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho ! they  
yield !'

So like a painted battle the war stood  
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.  
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved  
And honour'd most. 'Thou dost not doubt me  
King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for me to-day.'  
'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of God  
Descends upon thee in the battle-field :  
I know thee for my King !' Whereat the two,

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

For each had warded either in the fight,  
Sware on the field of death a deathless love.  
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in man :  
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field he sent  
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,  
Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee well  
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart  
Debating—'How should I that am a king,  
However much he help me at my need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
And a king's son?'—lifted his voice, and call'd  
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
He trusted all things, and of him required  
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of Arthur's  
birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said,  
'Sir King, there be but two old men that  
know :

And each is twice as old as I ; and one  
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
King Uther thro' his magic art ; and one  
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,  
Who taught him magic ; but the scholar ran



## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Before the master, and so far, that Bleys  
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote  
All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
In one great annal-book, where after-years  
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied,  
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well  
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,  
Then beast and man had had their share of me :  
But summon here before us yet once more  
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the King  
said,  
'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl,  
And reason in the chase : but wherefore now  
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,  
Some calling Arthur born of Gorloïs,  
Others of Anton ? Tell me, ye yourselves,  
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son ?'

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'  
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, spake—  
For bold in heart and act and word was he,  
Whenever slander breathed against the King—

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

‘ Sir, there be many rumours on this head :  
For there be those who hate him in their hearts,  
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are sweet,  
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man :  
And there be those who deem him more than  
man,

And dream he dropt from heaven : but my belief  
In all this matter—so ye care to learn—  
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther’s time  
The prince and warrior Gorloïs, he that held  
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne :  
And daughters had she borne him,—one whereof,  
Lot’s wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,  
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
To Arthur,—but a son she had not borne.  
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love :  
But she, a stainless wife to Gorloïs,  
So loathed the bright dishonour of his love,  
That Gorloïs and King Uther went to war :  
And overthrown was Gorloïs and slain.  
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,  
Left her and fled, and Uther enter’d in,  
And there was none to call to but himself.  
So, compass’d by the power of the King,  
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
And with a shameful swiftness : afterward,  
Not many moons, King Uther died himself,  
Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.  
And that same night, the night of the new year,  
By reason of the bitterness and grief  
That vext his mother, all before his time  
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
Until his hour should come ; because the lords  
Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child  
Piecemeal among them, had they known ; for each  
But sought to rule for his own self and hand,  
And many hated Uther for the sake  
Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the child,  
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
And ancient friend of Uther ; and his wife  
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with  
her own ;  
And no man knew. And ever since the lords  
Have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,  
So that the realm has gone to wrack : but now,  
This year, when Merlin (for his hour had come)  
Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,  
Proclaiming, " Here is Uther's heir, your king,"  
A hundred voices cried, " Away with him !  
No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he,  
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his craft,  
And while the people clamour'd for a king,  
Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the great lords  
Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Then while the King debated with himself  
If Arthur were the child of shamefulnes,  
Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,  
Or Uther's son, and born before his time,  
Or whether there were truth in anything  
Said by these three, there came to Cameliard,  
With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,  
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent ;  
Whom as he could, not as he would, the King  
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

‘ A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.  
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his men  
Report him ! Yea, but ye—think ye this king—  
So many those that hate him, and so strong,  
So few his knights, however brave they be—  
Hath body enow to hold his foemen down ? ’

‘ O King,’ she cried, ‘ and I will tell thee :  
few,  
Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him ;  
For I was near him when the savage yells  
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
Crown'd on the daïs, and his warriors cried,  
“ Be thou the king, and we will work thy will  
Who love thee.” Then the King in low deep  
tones,  
And simple words of great authority,  
Bound them by so strait vows to his own self,

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

That when they rose, knighted from kneeling,  
some  
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who wakes  
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

‘But when he spake and cheer’d his Table  
Round  
With large, divine, and comfortable words,  
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld  
From eye to eye thro’ all their Order flash  
A momentary likeness of the King :  
And ere it left their faces, thro’ the cross  
And those around it and the Crucified,  
Down from the casement over Arthur, smote  
Flame-colour, vert and azure, in three rays,  
One falling upon each of three fair queens,  
Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends  
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

‘And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit  
And hundred winters are but as the hands  
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

‘And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,  
Who knows a subtler magic than his own—  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

She gave the King his huge cross-hilted sword,  
Whereby to drive the heathen out : a mist  
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom ;  
But there was heard among the holy hymns  
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
Down in a deep ; calm, whatsoever storms  
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,  
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

‘There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword  
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright  
That men are blinded by it—on one side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,  
“Take me,” but turn the blade and ye shall see,  
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,  
“Cast me away !” And sad was Arthur's face  
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
“Take thou and strike ! the time to cast away  
Is yet far-off.” So this great brand the king  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.’

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought  
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
‘The swallow and the swift are near akin,

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
Being his own dear sister'; and she said,  
' Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I';  
' And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd the King.  
She answer'd, ' These be secret things,' and sign'd  
To those two sons to pass, and let them be.  
And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw :  
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
And there half-heard ; the same that afterward  
Struck for the throne, and striking found his  
doom.

And then the Queen made answer, ' What  
know I ?  
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,  
And dark in hair and eyes am I ; and dark  
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,  
Wellnigh to blackness ; but this King is fair  
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
" O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
To guard thee on the rough ways of the world." '

' Ay,' said the King, ' and hear ye such a cry ?  
But when did Arthur chance upon thee first ? '

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

‘O King!’ she cried, ‘and I will tell thee true :  
He found me first when yet a little maid :  
Beaten I had been for a little fault  
Whereof I was not guilty ; and out I ran  
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,  
And hated this fair world and all therein,  
And wept, and wish’d that I were dead ; and  
he—

I know not whether of himself he came,  
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk  
Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,  
And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,  
And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
And many a time he came, and evermore  
As I grew greater grew with me ; and sad  
At times he seem’d, and sad with him was I,  
Stern too at times, and then I loved him not,  
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.  
And now of late I see him less and less,  
But those first days had golden hours for me,  
For then I surely thought he would be king.

‘But let me tell thee now another tale :  
For Bleys, our Merlin’s master, as they say,  
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
To hear him speak before he left his life.  
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage ;  
And when I enter’d told me that himself  
And Merlin ever served about the King,  
Uther, before he died ; and on the night



## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
Left the still King, and passing forth to breathe,  
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm  
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night  
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were  
lost—

Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof  
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern  
Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two  
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,  
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,  
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep  
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame :  
And down the wave and in the flame was borne  
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried  
“The King !

Here is an heir for Uther !” And the fringe  
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,  
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.  
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
Free sky and stars : “And this same child,” he  
said,

“Is he who reigns ; nor could I part in peace  
Till this were told.” And saying this the seer

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,  
Not ever to be question'd any more  
Save on the further side ; but when I met  
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—  
The shining dragon and the naked child  
Descending in the glory of the seas—  
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
In riddling triplets of old time, and said :

“ Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow in the sky !  
A young man will be wiser by and by ;  
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow on the lea !  
And truth is this to me, and that to thee ;  
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain ! and the free blossom  
blows :  
Sun, rain, and sun ! and where is he who knows ?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.”

‘ So Merlin riddling anger'd me ; but thou  
Fear not to give this King thine only child,  
Guinevere : so great bards of him will sing  
Hereafter ; and dark sayings from of old  
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,  
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
Speak of the King ; and Merlin in our time  
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,  
But pass, again to come ; and then or now  
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
Till these and all men hail him for their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,  
But musing ' Shall I answer yea or nay ? '  
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,  
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,  
Now looming, and now lost ; and on the slope  
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was  
driven,  
Fire glimpsed ; and all the land from roof and  
rick,  
In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze  
And made it thicker ; while the phantom king  
Sent out at times a voice ; and here or there  
Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest  
Slew on and burnt, crying, ' No king of ours,  
No son of Uther, and no king of ours ' ;  
Till with a wink his dream was changed, the  
haze  
Descended, and the solid earth became  
As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,  
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent  
Ulfus, and Brastias and Bedivere,  
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he  
loved

And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth  
And bring the Queen ;—and watch'd him from  
the gates :

And Lancelot past away among the flowers,  
(For then was latter April) and return'd  
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.  
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,  
Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King  
That morn was married, while in stainless white,  
The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights  
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.  
Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,  
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,  
The Sun of May descended on their King,  
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,  
Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns  
A voice as of the waters, while the two  
Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love :  
And Arthur said, ' Behold, thy doom is mine.  
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death !'  
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,  
' King and my lord, I love thee to the death !'  
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,  
' Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world  
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,  
And all this Order of thy Table Round  
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King !'

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

So Dubric said ; but when they left the shrine  
Great Lords from Rome before the portal stood,  
In scornful stillness gazing as they past ;  
Then while they paced a city all on fire  
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,  
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King :—

‘ Blow trumpet, for the world is white with  
    May ;  
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away !  
Blow thro' the living world—“ Let the King  
    reign.”

‘ Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's  
    realm ?  
Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let the King  
    reign.

‘ Strike for the King and live ! his knights  
    have heard  
That God hath told the King a secret word.  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let the King  
    reign.

‘ Blow trumpet ! he will lift us from the dust.  
Blow trumpet ! live the strength and die the lust !  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand ! Let the  
    King reign.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

‘ Strike for the King and die ! and if thou diest,  
The King is King, and ever wills the highest.  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand ! Let the King  
reign.

‘ Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May !  
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day !  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand ! Let the King  
reign.

‘ The King will follow Christ, and we the King  
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let the King  
reign.’

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.  
There at the banquet those great Lords from  
Rome,  
The slowly-fading mistress of the world,  
Strode in, and claim’d their tribute as of yore.  
But Arthur spake, ‘ Behold, for these have sworn  
To wage my wars, and worship me their King ;  
The old order changeth, yielding place to new ;  
And we that fight for our fair father Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old  
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,  
No tribute will we pay ’ : so those great lords  
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with  
Rome.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space  
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the  
    King  
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame  
The heathen hordes, and made a realm and  
    reign'd.

## THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE  
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT  
GERAINT AND ENID  
BALIN AND BALAN  
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE  
THE HOLY GRAIL  
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT  
GUINEVERE

### GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring  
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted Pine  
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.  
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a false  
knight  
Or evil king before my lance if lance  
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,  
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—  
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows  
And mine is living blood : thou dost His will,  
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,  
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall  
Linger with vacillating obedience,



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to—  
Since the good mother holds me still a child !  
Good mother is bad mother unto me !  
A worse were better ; yet no worse would I.  
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force  
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,  
Until she let me fly discased to sweep  
In ever-highering eagle-circles up  
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop  
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,  
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,  
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he  
came  
With Modred hither in the summertime,  
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.  
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.  
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,  
“Thou hast half prevail'd against me,” said so—  
he—  
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,  
For he is always sullen : what care I ?'

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair  
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,  
Sweet mother, do ye love the child ?' She laugh'd,  
'Thou art but a wild-goose to question it.'  
'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he said,  
'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,  
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-beloved,  
An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,  
'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine  
Was finer gold than any goose can lay ;  
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.  
And there was ever haunting round the palm  
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw  
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and thought  
"An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,  
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings."  
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,  
One, that had loved him from his childhood, caught  
And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break thy  
neck,  
I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,  
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his neck,  
But brake his very heart in pining for it,  
And past away.'

To whom the mother said,  
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and  
climb'd,  
And handed down the golden treasure to him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,  
'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or she,  
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world  
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been  
Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

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## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,  
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,  
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,  
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,  
That sent him from his senses : let me go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,  
'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?  
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth  
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!  
For ever since when traitor to the King  
He fought against him in the Barons' war,  
And Arthur gave him back his territory,  
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there  
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,  
No more ; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor  
knows.

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,  
Albeit neither loved with that full love  
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love :  
Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm the bird,  
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,  
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang  
Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often chance  
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,  
Frights to my heart ; but stay : follow the deer  
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns ;  
So make thy manhood mightier day by day ;  
Sweet is the chase : and I will seek thee out  
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,  
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness  
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.  
Stay, my best son ! ye are yet more boy than  
man.'

Then Gareth, ' An ye hold me yet for child,  
Hear yet once more the story of the child.  
For, mother, there was once a King, like ours.  
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,  
Ask'd for a bride ; and thereupon the King  
Set two before him. One was fair, strong,  
arm'd—

But to be won by force—and many men  
Desired her ; one, good lack, no man desired.  
And these were the conditions of the King :  
That save he won the first by force, he needs  
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,  
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,  
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,  
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—  
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died of her.  
And one—they call'd her Fame ; and one,—O  
Mother,

How can ye keep me tether'd to you—Shame.  
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.  
Follow the deer ? follow the Christ, the King,  
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the  
King—  
Else, wherefore born ? '

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

To whom the mother said,  
'Sweet son, for there be many who deem him  
not,

Or will not deem him, wholly proven King—  
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,  
When I was frequent with him in my youth,  
And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted him  
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,  
Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou leave  
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,  
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?  
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth  
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not an hour,  
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,  
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.  
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome  
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd  
The Idolaters, and made the people free?  
Who should be King save him who makes us  
free?'

So when the Queen, who long had sought in  
vain  
To break him from the intent to which he grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,  
She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk thro' fire?  
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Ay, go then, an ye must : only one proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,  
' A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay—quick ! the proof to prove me to the  
quick ! '

But slowly spake the mother looking at him,  
' Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across the bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud  
To pass thereby ; so should he rest with her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,  
' The thrall in person may be free in soul,  
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,  
And since thou art my mother, must obey.



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

I therefore yield me freely to thy will ;  
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself  
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves ;  
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,  
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour,  
When waken'd by the wind which with full  
voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling two  
That still had tended on him from his birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.  
Southward they set their faces. The birds made  
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,  
And the live green had kindled into flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,  
That rose between the forest and the field.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

At times the summit of the high city flash'd ;  
At times the spires and turrets half-way down  
Prick'd thro' the mist ; at times the great gate  
shone

Only, that open'd on the field below :  
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were  
amazed,

One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.  
Here is a city of Enchanters, built  
By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd him,  
'Lord, we have heard from our wise man at  
home

To Northward, that this King is not the King,  
But only changeling out of Fairyland,  
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery  
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first again,  
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them  
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow  
In his own blood, his pryncedom, youth and  
hopes,

To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea ;  
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.  
And there was no gate like it under heaven.  
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined  
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

The Lady of the Lake stood : all her dress  
Wept from her sides as water flowing away ;  
But like the cross her great and goodly arms  
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld :  
And drops of water fell from either hand ;  
And down from one a sword was hung, from one  
A censer, either worn with wind and storm ;  
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish ;  
And in the space to left of her, and right,  
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
Were giddy gazing there ; and over all  
High on the top were those three Queens, the  
                  friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space  
Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd  
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings  
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl : they  
                  call'd  
To Gareth, ' Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes  
So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to move.  
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.  
Back from the gate started the three, to whom  
From out thereunder came an ancient man,  
Long-bearded, saying, ' Who be ye, my sons ? '

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then Gareth, ' We be tillers of the soil,  
Who leaving share in furrow come to see  
The glories of our King : but these, my men,  
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)  
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come  
From Fairyland ; and whether this be built  
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens ;  
Or whether there be any city at all,  
Or all a vision : and this music now  
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the  
truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer playing on  
him  
And saying, ' Son, I have seen the good ship  
sail  
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the  
heavens,  
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air :  
And here is truth ; but an it please thee not,  
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.  
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King  
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son ;  
They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft  
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,  
And built it to the music of their harps.  
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,  
For there is nothing in it as it seems  
Saving the King ; tho' some there be that hold  
The King a shadow, and the city real :

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass  
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become  
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King  
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame  
A man should not be bound by, yet the which  
No man can keep ; but, so thou dread to swear,  
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide  
Without, among the cattle of the field.  
For an ye heard a music, like enow  
They are building still, seeing the city is built  
To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake

Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine own  
beard  
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems  
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall !  
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been  
To thee fair-spoken ?'

But the Seer replied,

' Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards ?  
" Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion " ?  
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,  
And all that see thee, for thou art not who  
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.  
And now thou goest up to mock the King,  
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Unmockingly the mocker ending here  
Turn'd to the right, and past along the plain ;  
Whom Gareth looking after said, ' My men,  
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.  
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I :  
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer  
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain  
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
And stately, rich in emblem and the work  
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone ;  
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's  
court,  
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere  
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak  
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.  
And ever and anon a knight would pass  
Outward, or inward to the hall : his arms  
Clash'd ; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.  
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced  
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love ;  
And all about a healthful people stept  
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard  
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld  
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

The splendour of the presence of the King  
Throned, and delivering doom—and look'd no  
more—

But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,  
And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie  
The truthful King will doom me when I speak.'  
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes  
Of those tall knights, that ranged about the  
throne,  
Clear honour shining like the dewy star  
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with  
pure  
Affection, and the light of victory,  
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,  
'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft  
From my dead lord a field with violence:  
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,  
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it  
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold or  
field?'

To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my lord,  
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant field again,  
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,  
According to the years. No boon is here,  
But justice, so thy say be proven true.  
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did  
Would shape himself a right !'

And while she past,  
Came yet another widow crying to him,  
'A boon, Sir King ! Thine enemy, King, am I.  
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear  
lord,  
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,  
When Lot and many another rose and fought  
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.  
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.  
Yet lo ! my husband's brother had my son  
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead ;  
And standeth seized of that inheritance  
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the  
son.  
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,  
Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,  
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son.'

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to  
him,  
'A boon, Sir King ! I am her kinsman, I.  
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man.'



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,  
' A boon, Sir King ! ev'n that thou grant her none,  
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall—  
None ; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag.'

But Arthur, ' We sit King, to help the wrong'd  
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.  
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates !  
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames,  
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,  
And Uther slit thy tongue : but get thee hence—  
Lest that rough humour of the kings of old  
Return upon me ! Thou that art her kin,  
Go likewise ; lay him low and slay him not,  
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,  
According to the justice of the King :  
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King  
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,  
A name of evil savour in the land,  
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore  
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines  
A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,  
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,  
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,  
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot ;  
For having heard that Arthur of his grace

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram, knight,  
And, for himself was of the greater state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
Would yield him this large honour all the  
more ;  
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,  
In token of true heart and feälty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend  
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.  
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The goodly  
knight !

What ! shall the shield of Mark stand among  
these ?'

For, midway down the side of that long hall  
A stately pile,—whereof along the front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,  
There ran a treble range of stony shields,—  
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.  
And under every shield a knight was named :  
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall ;  
When some good knight had done one noble  
deed,

His arms were carven only ; but if twain  
His arms were blazon'd also ; but if none,  
The shield was blank and bare without a sign  
Saving the name beneath ; and Gareth saw  
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,  
And Modred's blank as death ; and Arthur cried  
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘ More like are we to reave him of his crown  
Than make him knight because men call him  
king.

The kings we found, ye know we stay’d their  
hands

From war among themselves, but left them kings ;  
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we  
enroll’d

Among us, and they sit within our hall.

But Mark hath tarnish’d the great name of king,  
As Mark would sully the low state of churl :

And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,  
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,  
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,  
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,  
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—  
No fault of thine : let Kay the seneschal  
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—  
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen !’

And many another suppliant crying came  
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,  
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily  
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,  
Approach’d between them toward the King, and  
ask’d,

‘ A boon, Sir King (his voice was all ashamed),

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

For see ye not how weak and hungerworn  
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve  
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves  
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.  
Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,  
'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!  
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,  
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien  
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself  
Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!  
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey, where,  
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,  
However that might chance! but an he work,  
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir Seneschal,  
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the  
hounds;  
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:  
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,  
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands  
Large, fair and fine!—Some young lad's mystery—

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy  
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,  
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of  
him.'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou of mystery?  
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?  
Nay, for he spake too fool-like : mystery !  
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd  
For horse and armour : fair and fine, forsooth !  
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands ? but see thou to it  
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day  
Undo thee not—and leave my man to me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage ;  
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,  
And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.  
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,  
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,  
Would hustle and harry him, and labour him  
Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set  
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,  
Or grosser tasks ; and Gareth bow'd himself  
With all obedience to the King, and wrought  
All kind of service with a noble ease  
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.  
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,  
And one would praise the love that linkt the  
King

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And Lancelot—how the King had saved his life  
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's—  
For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,  
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—  
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told,  
How once the wandering forester at dawn,  
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,  
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,  
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,  
'He passes to the Isle Avilion,  
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die'—  
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,  
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,  
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud  
That first they mock'd, but, after, revered him.  
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale  
Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling way  
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held  
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates  
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,  
Charm'd ; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come  
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind  
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.  
Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,  
So there were any trial of mastery,  
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone  
Was counted best ; and if there chanced a joust,  
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,  
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the  
knights  
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy  
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls ;  
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,  
Repentant of the word she made him swear,  
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,  
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,  
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot  
With whom he used to play at tourney once,  
When both were children, and in lonely haunts  
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
And each at either dash from either end—  
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.  
He laugh'd ; he sprang. ‘ Out of the smoke, at  
once  
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—  
These news be mine, none other's—nay, the  
King's—  
Descend into the city ' : whereon he sought  
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

‘ I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt  
For pastime ; yea, he said it : joust can I.  
Make me thy knight—in secret ! let my name  
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I spring  
Like flame from ashes.’

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Here the King's calm eye  
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and  
bow

Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him,  
'Son, the good mother let me know thee here,  
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.  
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to  
vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees,  
'My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.  
For uttermost obedience make demand  
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!  
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,  
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—  
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,  
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
And one with me in all, he needs must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot  
know,  
Thy noblest and thy truest!'



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And the King—

‘ But wherefore would ye men should wonder at  
you ?

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,  
And the deed’s sake my knighthood do the  
deed,  
Than to be noised of.’

Merrily Gareth ask’d,

‘ Have I not earn’d my cake in baking of it ?  
Let be my name until I make my name !  
My deeds will speak : it is but for a day.’  
So with a kindly hand on Gareth’s arm  
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly  
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.  
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,  
‘ I have given him the first quest : he is not  
proven.

Look therefore when he calls for this in hall,  
Thou get to horse and follow him far away.  
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see  
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta’en nor slain.’

Then that same day there past into the hall  
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,  
Hawk-eyes ; and lightly was her slender nose  
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower ;  
She into hall past with her page and cried,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,  
See to the foe within ! bridge, ford, beset  
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower  
The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye there ?  
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,  
Till ev’n the lonest hold were all as free  
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-cloth  
From that best blood it is a sin to spill.’

‘Comfort thyself,’ said Arthur, ‘I nor mine  
Rest : so my knighthood keep the vows they  
swore,  
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be  
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.  
What is thy name ? thy need ?’

‘My name?’ she said—  
‘Lynette my name ; noble ; my need, a knight  
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.  
She lives in Castle Perilous : a river  
Runs in three loops about her living-place ;  
And o’er it are three passings, and three knights  
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth  
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stay’d  
In her own castle, and so besieges her  
To break her will, and make her wed with him :  
And but delays his purport till thou send

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

To do the battle with him, thy chief man  
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow,  
Then wed, with glory : but she will not wed  
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.  
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd,  
'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush  
All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these  
four,  
Who be they ? What the fashion of the men ?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,  
The fashion of that old knight-errantry  
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will ;  
Courteous or bestial from the moment, such  
As have nor law nor king ; and three of these  
Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,  
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,  
Being strong fools ; and never a whit more wise  
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in black,  
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.  
He names himself the Night and oftener Death,  
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,  
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,  
To show that who may slay or scape the three,  
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.  
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,  
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,  
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,  
'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then—for he  
mark'd

Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—  
'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave  
am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,  
And I can topple over a hundred such.  
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing at him,  
Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough,  
sudden,

And pardonable, worthy to be knight—  
Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath  
Slew the May-white : she lifted either arm,  
'Fie on thee, King ! I ask'd for thy chief knight,  
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave.'  
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,  
Fled down the lane of access to the King,  
Took horse, descended the slope street, and past  
The weird white gate, and paused without, beside  
The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,  
At one end one, that gave upon a range  
Of level pavement where the King would pace  
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood ;

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And down from this a lordly stairway sloped  
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers ;  
And out by this main doorway past the King.  
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose  
High that the highest-crested helm could ride  
Therethro' nor graze : and by this entry fled  
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this  
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door  
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,  
A warhorse of the best, and near it stood  
The two that out of north had follow'd him :  
This bare a maiden shield, a casque ; that held  
The horse, the spear ; whereat Sir Gareth loosed  
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,  
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,  
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,  
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as  
those

Dull-coated things, that making slide apart  
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns  
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.  
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.  
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the  
shield

And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of grain  
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt  
With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest  
The people, while from out of kitchen came  
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd  
Lustier than any, and whom they could but  
love,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,  
'God bless the King, and all his fellowship !'  
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode  
Down the slope street, and past without the  
gate.

So Gareth past with joy ; but as the cur  
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause  
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,  
His owner, but remembers all, and growls  
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door  
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used  
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest  
With horse and arms—the King hath past his  
time—  
My scullion knave ! Thralls to your work again,  
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine !  
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East ?  
Begone !—my knave !—belike and like enow  
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth  
So shook his wits they wander in his prime—  
Crazed ! How the villain lifted up his voice,  
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave.  
Tut : he was tame and meek enow with me,  
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.  
Well—I will after my loud knave, and learn  
Whether he know me for his master yet.  
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire—  
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,  
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,  
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,  
For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
But ever meekly served the King in thee?  
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great  
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword.'  
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are overfine  
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies':  
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode  
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet  
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did the King  
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least  
He might have yielded to me one of those  
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie upon him—  
His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew  
(And there were none but few goodlier than he)  
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.  
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one  
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,  
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose  
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,  
‘Hence !

Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.  
And look who comes behind,’ for there was Kay.  
‘Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.  
We lack thee by the hearth.’

And Gareth to him,  
‘Master no more ! too well I know thee, ay—  
The most ungentle knight in Arthur’s hall.’  
‘Have at thee then,’ said Kay : they shock’d, and  
Kay  
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,  
‘Lead, and I follow,’ and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly  
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse  
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,  
Perforce she stay’d, and overtaken spoke.

‘What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?  
Deem’st thou that I accept thee aught the more  
Or love thee better, that by some device  
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,  
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master—  
thou !—

Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon !—to me  
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before.’



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘Damsel,’ Sir Gareth answer’d gently, ‘say  
Whate’er ye will, but whatsoe’er ye say,  
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
Or die therefore.’

‘Ay, wilt thou finish it ?  
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks !  
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.  
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,  
And then by such a one that thou for all  
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.’

‘I shall assay,’ said Gareth with a smile  
That madden’d her, and away she flash’d again  
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,  
And Gareth following was again beknaved.

‘Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss’d the only way  
Where Arthur’s men are set along the wood ;  
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves :  
If both be slain, I am rid of thee ; but yet,  
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine ?  
Fight, an thou canst : I have miss’d the only way.’

So till the dusk that follow’d evensong  
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled ;  
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,  
Bowl-shaped, thro’ tops of many thousand pines  
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

To westward—in the deeps whereof a mere,  
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,  
Under the half-dead sunset glared ; and shouts  
Ascended, and there brake a servingman  
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,  
‘They have bound my lord to cast him in the  
mere.’

Then Gareth, ‘Bound am I to right the wrong’d,  
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee.’  
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,  
‘Lead, and I follow,’ Gareth cried again,  
‘Follow, I lead !’ so down among the pines  
He plunged ; and there, blackshadow’d nigh the  
mere,

And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,  
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,  
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.  
Three with good blows he quieted, but three  
Fled thro’ the pines ; and Gareth loosed the stone  
From off his neck, then in the mere beside  
Tumbled it ; oilily bubbled up the mere.  
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet  
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur’s friend.

‘Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues  
Had wreak’d themselves on me ; good cause is  
theirs

To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here  
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck ;

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And under this wan water many of them  
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,  
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved  
a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.  
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully,  
What guerdon will ye ?

Gareth sharply spake,  
‘None ! for the deed’s sake have I done the deed,  
In uttermost obedience to the King.  
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbourage ?’

Whereat the Baron saying, ‘I well believe  
You be of Arthur’s Table,’ a light laugh  
Broke from Lynette, ‘Ay, truly of a truth,  
And in a sort, being Arthur’s kitchen-knave !—  
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,  
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
A thresher with his flail had scatter’d them.  
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen still.  
But an this lord will yield us harbourage,  
Well.’

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,  
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
His towers where that day a feast had been

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
And many a costly cate, received the three.  
And there they placed a peacock in his pride  
Before the damsel, and the Baron set  
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

‘ Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,  
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.  
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur’s hall,  
And pray’d the King would grant me Lancelot  
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—  
The last a monster unsubduable  
Of any save of him for whom I call’d—  
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,  
“The quest is mine ; thy kitchen-knave am I,  
And mighty thro’ thy meats and drinks am I.”  
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,  
“Go therefore,” and so gives the quest to  
him—  
Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine  
Than ride abroad redressing women’s wrong,  
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.’

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the  
lord  
Now look’d at one and now at other, left  
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
And, seating Gareth at another board,  
Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or  
not,  
Or whether it be the maiden’s fantasy,  
And whether she be mad, or else the King,  
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
I ask not : but thou strikest a strong stroke,  
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,  
And saver of my life ; and therefore now,  
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh  
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back  
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
Thy pardon ; I but speak for thine avail,  
The saver of my life.’

And Gareth said,  
‘ Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.’

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he  
saved  
Had, some brief space, convey’d them on their  
way  
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,  
‘ Lead, and I follow.’ Haughtily she replied,

‘ I fly no more : I allow thee for an hour.  
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,  
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks  
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool ?

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee : then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding me  
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously,  
' Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops  
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.  
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep ; the  
stream

Full, narrow ; this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap ; and on the further side  
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold  
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and above,  
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.  
And therefore the lawless warrior paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, ' Damsel, is this he,  
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's  
hall ?

For whom we let thee pass.' ' Nay, nay,' she  
said,

' Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn  
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

His kitchen-knave : and look thou to thyself :  
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd : he is not knight but  
knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls  
In gilt and rosy raiment came : their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd ; and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem  
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield  
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.  
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,  
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,  
Glorying ; and in the stream beneath him, shone  
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly,  
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Wherefore stare  
ye so ?  
Thou shakest in thy fear : there yet is time :  
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.  
Who will cry shame ? Thou art not knight but  
knave.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether knave or knight,  
Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.  
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee ;  
But truly foul are better, for they send  
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know  
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore  
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the  
bridge,  
' A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me !  
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.  
For this were shame to do him further wrong  
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse  
And arms, and so return him to the King.  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.  
Avoid : for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady.'

' Dog, thou liest.  
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own.'  
He spake ; and all at fiery speed the two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear  
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,  
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,  
Fell, as if dead ; but quickly rose and drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,  
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-  
knave !'

Till Gareth's shield was cloven ; but one stroke  
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my life : I  
yield.'

And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me  
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'

She reddening, 'Insolent scullion : I of thee ?  
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd !'

'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there unlaced  
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,

'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay

One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy charge  
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,

Thy life is thine at her command. Arise

And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say

His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave  
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.

Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.

Thy shield is mine—farewell ; and, damsel, thou,  
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.

Then when he came upon her, spake, 'Methought,  
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the  
bridge

The savour of thy kitchen came upon me

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

A little faintlier : but the wind hath changed :  
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,  
"O morning star" (not that tall felon there  
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness  
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),  
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,  
Smile sweetly, thou ! my love hath smiled on  
me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a ford—  
The second brother in their fool's parable—  
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.  
Care not for shame : thou art not knight but  
knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laughingly,  
'Parables ? Hear a parable of the knave.  
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest  
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates  
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,  
"Guard it," and there was none to meddle with it.  
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King  
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,  
To worry, and not to flee—and—knight or  
knave—

The knave that doth thee service as full knight  
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘ Ay, Sir Knave !

Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,  
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.’

‘ Fair damsel, you should worship me the  
more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies.’

‘ Ay, ay,’ she said, ‘ but thou shalt meet thy  
match.’

So when they touch’d the second river-loop,  
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail  
Burnish’d to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun  
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,  
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,  
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash’d the fierce  
shield,

All sun ; and Gareth’s eyes had flying blots  
Before them when he turn’d from watching him.  
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar’d,  
‘ What doest thou, brother, in my marches here ?’  
And she athwart the shallow shrill’d again,  
‘ Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur’s hall  
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.’  
‘ Ugh !’ cried the Sun, and vizoring up a red  
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,  
Push’d horse across the foamings of the ford,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Whom Gareth met midstream : no room was  
there  
For lance or tourney-skill : four strokes they  
struck  
With sword, and these were mighty ; the new  
knight  
Had fear he might be shamed ; but as the Sun  
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,  
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the  
stream  
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford ;  
So drew him home ; but he that fought no more,  
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded ; and Gareth sent him to the King.  
' Myself when I return will plead for thee.'  
' Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.  
' Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again ?'  
' Nay, not a point : nor art thou victor here.  
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford ;  
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

“ O Sun ” (not this strong fool whom thou,  
Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),  
“ O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,  
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly : twice my love hath smiled on me.”

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘What knowest thou of lovesong or of love ?  
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,  
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

“O dewy flowers that open to the sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,  
Blow sweetly : twice my love hath smiled on me.”

‘What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,  
To garnish meats with ? hath not our good King  
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,  
A foolish love for flowers ? what stick ye round  
The pasty ? wherewithal deck the boar’s head ?  
Flowers ? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

“O birds, that warble to the morning sky,  
O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly : twice my love hath smiled on me.”

‘What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis,  
merle,  
Linnet ? what dream ye when they utter forth  
May-music growing with the growing light,  
Their sweet sun-worship ? these be for the snare  
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting. See thou have not now  
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.  
There stands the third fool of their allegory.’

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,  
All in a rose-red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad  
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight,  
That named himself the Star of Evening, stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the madman  
there  
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she cried,  
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins  
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave  
His armour off him, these will turn the blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,  
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?  
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain  
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel cried,

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven  
With all disaster unto thine and thee!  
For both thy younger brethren have gone down  
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star;  
Art thou not old?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,  
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys.'  
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in brag!  
But that same strength which threw the Morning  
Star  
Can throw the Evening.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then that other blew  
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.  
'Approach and arm me !' With slow steps  
from out

An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd  
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,  
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a  
helm

With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
And gave a shield whereon the Star of Even  
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone.  
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,  
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge ;  
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,  
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,  
But up like fire he started : and as oft  
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,  
So many a time he vaulted up again ;  
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,  
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,  
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one  
That all in later, sadder age begins  
To war against ill uses of a life,  
But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us  
down !'

He half despairs ; so Gareth seem'd to strike  
Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the while,  
'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good  
knight-knave—

O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Shame me not, shame me not. I have  
          prophesied—

Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round—  
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin—  
Strike—strike—the wind will never change  
          again.'

And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,  
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off him,  
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,  
And could not wholly bring him under, more  
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,  
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs  
For ever ; till at length Sir Gareth's brand  
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.  
'I have thee now' ; but forth that other sprang,  
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms  
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost  
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge  
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,  
'Lead, and I follow.'

  But the damsel said,  
'I lead no longer ; ride thou at my side ;  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

    ' " O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,  
O rainbow with three colours after rain,  
Shine sweetly : thrice my love hath smiled on  
          me."



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

‘Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added—  
Knight,

But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—  
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King  
Scorn’d me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,  
For thou hast ever answer’d courteously,  
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal  
As any of Arthur’s best, but, being knave,  
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art.’

‘Damsel,’ he said, ‘you be not all to blame,  
Saving that you mistrusted our good King  
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one  
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;  
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold  
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet  
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
His heart be stirr’d with any foolish heat  
At any gentle damsel’s waywardness.  
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for  
me:

And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks  
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,  
Hath force to quell me.’

Nigh upon that hour  
When the lone henn forgets his melancholy,  
Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams  
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,  
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine  
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors  
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse  
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.  
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here  
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock  
The war of Time against the soul of man.  
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory  
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.  
Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt and read—  
In letters like to those the vexillary  
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt—  
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—'HESPERUS'—  
'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures, armed men,  
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
And running down the Soul, a Shape that fled  
With broken wings, torn raiment and loose hair,  
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.  
'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,  
Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first  
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,  
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood—

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops—  
His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew  
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star  
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,  
'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my  
friend.'

And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry ;  
But when they closed—in a moment—at one  
touch

Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world—  
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
That when he found the grass within his hands  
He laugh'd ; the laughter jarr'd upon Lynette :  
Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and over-  
thrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,  
Why laugh ye ? that ye blew your boast in  
vain ?'

'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son  
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,  
And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by  
whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—  
Device and sorcery and unhappiness—  
Out, sword ; we are thrown !' And Lancelot  
answer'd, 'Prince,

O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness  
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,  
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,  
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot!—thine the  
hand  
That threw me? An some chance to mar the  
boast  
Thy brethren of thee make—which could not  
chance—  
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,  
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant, 'Lancelot,  
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore  
now  
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,  
Who being still rebuked, would answer still  
Courteous as any knight—but now, if knight,  
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,  
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon :  
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.  
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,  
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince  
and fool,  
I hate thee and for ever.'

And Lancelot said,  
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou  
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise  
To call him shamed, who is but overthrown?  
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.  
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,  
And overthrower from being overthrown.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

With sword we have not striven ; and thy good  
horse

And thou are weary ; yet not less I felt  
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.  
Well hast thou done ; for all the stream is freed,  
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,  
And when reviled, hast answer'd graciously,  
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince,  
Knight,  
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our Table  
Round !'

And then when turning to Lynette he told  
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,  
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than being fool'd  
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,  
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks  
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.  
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.  
Seek, till we find.' And when they sought and  
found,  
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life  
Past into sleep ; on whom the maiden gazed.  
'Sound sleep be thine ! sound cause to sleep hast  
thou.  
Wake lusty ! Seem I not as tender to him  
As any mother ? Ay, but such a one  
As all day long hath rated at her child,  
And vexed his day, but blesses him asleep—  
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

In the hush'd night, as if the world were one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness !  
O Lancelot, Lancelot'—and she clapt her hands—  
' Full merry am I to find my goodly knave  
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,  
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,  
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.  
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first ;  
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave  
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment.'

Said Lancelot, ' Peradventure he, you name,  
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,  
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,  
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well  
As he that rides him.' ' Lancelot-like,' she said,  
' Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the  
shield ;  
' Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all  
spears  
Are rotten sticks ! ye seem agape to roar !  
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord !—  
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.  
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these  
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will not  
shame  
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.  
Hence : let us go.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Silent the silent field  
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho' summer-wan,  
In counter motion to the clouds, allured  
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.  
A star shot : 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe falls !'  
An owl whoopt : 'Hark the victor pealing  
there !'

Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying,  
'Yield, yield him this again : 'tis he must fight :  
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday  
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now  
To lend thee horse and shield : wonders ye have  
done ;

Miracles ye cannot : here is glory enow  
In having flung the three : I see thee maim'd,  
Mangled : I swear thou canst not fling the  
fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel ? tell me all ye know.  
You cannot scare me ; nor rough face, or voice,  
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery  
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,  
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
Seeing he never rides abroad by day ;  
But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass  
Chilling the night : nor have I heard the voice.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page  
Who came and went, and still reported him  
As closing in himself the strength of ten,  
And when his anger tare him, massacring  
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the soft babe !  
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,  
Monster ! O Prince, I went for Lancelot first,  
The quest is Lancelot's : give him back the  
shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, ' An he fight for this,  
Belike he wins it as the better man :  
Thus—and not else ! '

But Lancelot on him urged  
All the devisings of their chivalry  
When one might meet a mightier than himself ;  
How best to manage horse, lance, sword and  
shield,  
And so fill up the gap where force might fail  
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth, ' Here be rules. I know but  
one—  
To dash against mine enemy and to win.  
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,  
And seen thy way.' ' Heaven help thee,' sigh'd  
Lynette.



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew  
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode  
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,  
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, 'There.'  
And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd  
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,  
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn  
Beside it hanging ; which Sir Gareth graspt,  
And so, before the two could hinder him,  
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.  
Echo'd the walls ; a light twinkled ; anon  
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew ;  
Whereon were hollow tramlings up and down  
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past ;  
Till high above him, circled with her maids,  
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him  
White hands, and courtesy ; but when the Prince  
Three times had blown—after long hush—at  
last—

The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed  
therein.

High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack arms,  
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,  
And crown'd with fleshless laughter—some ten  
steps—

In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced  
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,  
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,  
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath  
given,

But must, to make the terror of thee more,  
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries  
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,  
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling  
flowers

As if for pity?' But he spake no word;  
Which set the horror higher: a maiden swoon'd;  
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,  
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death;  
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;  
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt  
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,  
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward  
with him.

Then those that did not blink the terror, saw  
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.  
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.  
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.  
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm  
As throughly as the skull; and out from this  
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy  
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, 'Knight,  
Slay me not: my three brethren bad me do it,  
To make a horror all about the house,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.  
They never dream'd the passes would be past.'  
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair child,  
What madness made thee challenge the chief  
knight  
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bad me do it.  
They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's  
friend,  
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,  
They never dream'd the passes could be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from under-  
ground;  
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance  
And revel and song, made merry over Death,  
As being after all their foolish fears  
And horrors only proven a blooming boy.  
So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
 A tributary prince of Devon, one  
 Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
 Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
 And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.  
 And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
 At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
 With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint  
 To make her beauty vary day by day,  
 In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
 And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,  
 Who first had found and loved her in a state  
 Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
 In some fresh splendour ; and the Queen herself,  
 Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,  
 Loved her, and often with her own white  
     hands  
 Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
 Next after her own self, in all the court.  
 And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
 Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
 And loveliest of all women upon earth.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
Not less Geraint believed it ; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature : wherefore going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his pryncedom lay  
Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,  
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law :  
And therefore, till the King himself should please  
To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,  
He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches ; and the King  
Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores  
Of Severn, and they past to their own land ;  
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his princedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes :  
This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,  
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more :  
And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy ;  
While he that watch'd her sadden, was the more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer morn  
(They sleeping each by either) the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams ;  
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his throat,  
The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,  
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he ?

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

‘ O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is gone ?  
I *am* the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they say.  
And yet I hate that he should linger here ;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mightful hand striking great  
    blows  
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his eyes,  
Than that my lord thro' me should suffer  
    shame.  
Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierced to death before mine eyes,  
And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy ?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.’

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her weep  
True tears upon his broad and naked breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mischance  
He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, 'In spite of all my care,  
For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,  
She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall.'  
Then tho' he loved and revered her too much  
To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right thro' his manful breast darted the pang  
That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.  
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,  
And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,  
'My charger and her palfrey'; then to her,  
'I will ride forth into the wilderness ;  
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.  
And thou, put on thy worst and meanest dress  
And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd, amazed,  
'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'  
But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey.'  
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
With sprigs of summer laid between the folds,  
She took them, and array'd herself therein,



## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Remembering when first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey to her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
First seen that day : these things he told the  
King.

Then the good King gave order to let blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.  
And when the Queen petition'd for his leave  
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
So with the morning all the court were gone.  
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love  
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt ;  
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the  
wood ;

There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds ; but heard instead  
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,  
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford  
Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him :  
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later than we !'  
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and so late  
That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,' she said ;  
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall hear the  
hounds :  
Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,  
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there  
rode  
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf ;  
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight  
Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent  
Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf ;

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not know.  
'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.  
'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried the  
dwarf;

'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him';  
And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'  
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,  
Who answer'd as before; and when the Prince  
Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,  
Struck at him with his whip, and cut his  
cheek.

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:  
But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd  
From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself:  
And I will track this vermin to their earths:  
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms  
On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,  
And on the third day will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the stately  
Queen.

'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;  
And may you light on all things that you love,  
And live to wed with her whom first you love :  
But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,  
And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,  
Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he  
heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade  
And valley, with fixt eye following the three.  
At last they issued from the world of wood,  
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.  
And thither came Geraint, and underneath  
Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side whereof,  
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose ;  
And on one side a castle in decay,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine :  
And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,  
And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.  
'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him to  
his earth.'

And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd  
His master's armour ; and of such a one  
He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the town ?'  
Who told him, scouring still, 'The sparrow-  
hawk !'

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub  
here ?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh ! the sparrow-hawk.'  
Then riding further past an armourer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his  
work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him, said :

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

‘ Friend, he that labours for the sparrow-hawk  
Has little time for idle questioners.’

Whereat Geraint flash’d into sudden spleen :

‘ A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk !

Tits, wrens, and all wing’d nothings peck him  
dead !

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world ! What is it to me ?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,

Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks !

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harbourage for the night ?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy ? Speak !’

Whereat the armourer turning all amazed

And seeing one so gay in purple silks,

Came forward with the helmet yet in hand

And answer’d, ‘ Pardon me, O stranger knight ;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,

And there is scanty time for half the work.

Arms ? truth ! I know not : all are wanted here.

Harbourage ? truth, good truth, I know not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol’s, o’er the bridge

Yonder.’ He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann’d the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,

(His dress a suit of fray’d magnificence,

Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said :

‘ Whither, fair son ? ’ to whom Geraint replied,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

‘O friend, I seek a harbourage for the night.’  
Then Yniol, ‘Enter therefore and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door’d.’  
‘Thanks, venerable friend,’ replied Geraint ;  
‘So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks  
For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours’ fast.’  
Then sigh’d and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,  
And answer’d, ‘Graver cause than yours is mine  
To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-  
hawk :  
But in, go in ; for save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev’n in jest.’

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly star  
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look’d and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter’d archway plumed with  
fern ;  
And here had fall’n a great part of a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,  
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers :  
And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound  
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,  
And suck’d the joining of the stones, and look’d  
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,  
Singing ; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form ;  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint ;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and  
red,

And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
To think or say, 'There is the nightingale' ;  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,  
'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang :

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the  
proud ;  
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and  
cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.



## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

‘Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or  
frown ;  
With that wild wheel we go not up or down ;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

‘Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands ;  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands ;  
For man is man and master of his fate.

‘Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd ;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.’

‘Hark, by the bird’s song ye may learn the  
nest,’  
Said Yniol ; ‘enter quickly.’ Entering then,  
Right o’er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter’d many-cobweb’d hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade ;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,  
‘Here by God’s rood is the one maid for me.’  
But none spake word except the hoary Earl :  
‘Enid, the good knight’s horse stands in the  
court ;  
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and then

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine ;  
And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.'

He spake : the Prince, as Enid past him, fain  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught  
His purple scarf, and held, and said, ' Forbear !  
Rest ! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my son,  
Endures not that her guest should serve himself.'  
And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall ;  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the Prince and  
Earl  
Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine.  
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them  
cheer,  
And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the three.  
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it down :

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall ;  
Then suddenly address the hoary Earl :

‘ Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy ;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he ? tell me of him.  
His name ? but no, good faith, I will not have it :  
For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason’s hand, then have I sworn  
From his own lips to have it—I am Geraint  
Of Devon—for this morning when the Queen  
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return’d  
Indignant to the Queen ; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have it of him.  
And all unarm’d I rode, and thought to find  
Arms in your town, where all the men are mad ;  
They take the rustic murmur of their bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round the world ;  
They would not hear me speak : but if ye know  
Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have sworn  
That I will break his pride and learn his name,  
Avenging this great insult done the Queen.’

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Then cried Earl Yniol, ‘ Art thou he indeed,  
Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds ? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your state  
And presence might have guess’d you one of those  
That eat in Arthur’s hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery ;  
For this dear child hath often heard me praise  
Your feats of arms, and often when I paused  
Hath ask’d again, and ever loved to hear ;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong :  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden ; first Limours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,  
Drunk even when he woo’d ; and be he dead  
I know not, but he past to the wild land.  
The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,  
My curse, my nephew—I will not let his name  
Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
Refused her to him, then his pride awoke ;  
And since the proud man often is the mean,  
He sow’d a slander in the common ear,  
Affirming that his father left him gold,  
And in my charge, which was not render’d to him ;  
Bribed with large promises the men who served  
About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat broken into  
Thro’ open doors and hospitality ;

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Raised my own town against me in the night  
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house ;  
From mine own earldom foully ousted me ;  
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
For truly there are those who love me yet ;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,  
But that his pride too much despises me :  
And I myself sometimes despise myself ;  
For I have let men be, and have their way ;  
Am much too gentle, have not used my power :  
Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish ; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently.'

‘Well said, true heart,’ replied Geraint, ‘but  
arms,  
That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew, fight  
In next day's tourney I may break his pride.’

And Yniol answer'd, ‘Arms, indeed, but old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at thine asking, thine.  
But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And over these is placed a silver wand,  
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
And this, what knight soever be in field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,  
Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And toppling over all antagonism  
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.  
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,  
Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy leave !  
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain  
Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,  
As I will make her truly my true wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid there,  
(Who hearing her own name had stol'n away)  
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

‘ Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince.’

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she  
With frequent smile and nod departing found,  
Half disarray’d as to her rest, the girl ;  
Whom first she kiss’d on either cheek, and then  
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart : but never light and shade  
Coursed one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale  
Across the face of Enid hearing her ;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast ;  
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it ;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail’d to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness ;  
And when the pale and bloodless east began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,  
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro' these  
Princelike his bearing shone ; and errant knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the ground,  
And over these they placed the silver wand,  
And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,  
Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,  
'Advance and take, as fairest of the fair,  
What I these two years past have won for thee,  
The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the Prince,  
'Forbear : there is a worthier,' and the knight  
With some surprise and thrice as much disdain  
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face  
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,  
So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
'Do battle for it then,' no more ; and thrice  
They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their  
spears.  
Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each  
So often and with such blows, that all the crowd  
Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls  
There came a clapping as of phantom hands.  
So twice they fought, and twice they breathed,  
and still



## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

The dew of their great labour, and the blood  
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.  
But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,  
'Remember that great insult done the Queen,'  
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,  
And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,  
And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the fallen  
man

Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son of Nudd !  
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
My pride is broken : men have seen my fall.'  
'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied Geraint,  
'These two things shalt thou do, or else thou  
diest.

First, thou thyself, with damsel and with dwarf,  
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming there,  
Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,  
And shalt abide her judgment on it ; next,  
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.  
These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die.'  
And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will I do,  
For I have never yet been overthrown,  
And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride  
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall !'  
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
And being young, he changed and came to loathe  
His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself  
Bright from his old dark life, and fell at last  
In the great battle fighting for the King.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

But when the third day from the hunting-morn  
Made a low splendour in the world, and wings  
Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,  
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
Woke and bethought her of her promise given  
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
He would not leave her, till her promise given—  
To ride with him this morning to the court,  
And there be made known to the stately Queen,  
And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.  
For as a leaf in mid-November is  
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
The dress that now she look'd on to the dress  
She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
And still she look'd, and still the terror grew  
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a  
    court,  
All staring at her in her faded silk :  
And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

‘ This noble prince who won our earldom back,  
So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him !  
Would he could tarry with us here awhile,  
But being so beholden to the Prince,  
It were but little grace in any of us,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
To seek a second favour at his hands.  
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,  
Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly gift  
Of her good mother, given her on the night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house,  
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :  
For while the mother show'd it, and the two  
Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled  
With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought them  
bread :

And Edyrn's men had caught them in their  
flight,

And placed them in this ruin ; and she wish'd  
The Prince had found her in her ancient home ;  
Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she knew ;  
And last bethought her how she used to watch,  
Near that old home, a pool of golden carp ;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless  
Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;  
And half asleep she made comparison

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;  
But this was in the garden of a king ;  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew  
That all was bright ; that all about were birds  
Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd  
Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
And lords and ladies of the high court went  
In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
And children of the King in cloth of gold  
Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the  
walks ;

And while she thought 'They will not see me,'  
came

A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,  
And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at all  
Let them be gold ; and charge the gardeners  
now

To pick the faded creature from the pool,  
And cast it on the mixen that it die.'  
And therewithal one came and seized on her,  
And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,  
And lo ! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake ; and in her hand  
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

‘See here, my child, how fresh the colours  
look,  
How fast they hold like colours of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.  
Why not? It never yet was worn, I trow :  
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know it.’

And Enid look’d, but all confused at first,  
Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream :  
Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer’d, ‘Yea, I know it ; your good gift,  
So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;  
Your own good gift !’ ‘Yea, surely,’ said the  
dame,

‘And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol thro’ the town, and everywhere  
He found the sack and plunder of our house  
All scatter’d thro’ the houses of the town ;  
And gave command that all which once was  
ours

Should now be ours again : and yester-eve,  
While ye were talking sweetly with your Prince,  
Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again.  
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?  
For I myself unwillingly have worn

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,  
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.

Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,  
And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all  
That appertains to noble maintenance.

Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house ;  
But since our fortune swerved from sun to  
                  shade,

And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need  
Constrain'd us, but a better time has come ;  
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride :

For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.

And should some great court-lady say, the  
                  Prince

Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,  
And like a madman brought her to the court,  
Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might shame  
                  the Prince

To whom we are beholden ; but I know,  
When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
That neither court nor country, tho' they  
                  sought

Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her match.'

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Here ceased the kindly mother out of breath ;  
And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay ;  
Then, as the white and glittering star of morn  
Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
And left her maiden couch, and robed herself,  
Help'd by the mother's careful hand and eye,  
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown ;  
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and said,  
She never yet had seen her half so fair ;  
And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,  
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers,  
And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first  
Invaded Britain, ' But we beat him back,  
As this great Prince invaded us, and we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him with joy.  
And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and wild ;  
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced, Geraint  
Woke where he slept in the high hall, and call'd  
For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid gay  
In such apparel as might well beseem  
His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
He answer'd : ' Earl, entreat her by my love,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded silk.  
Yniol with that hard message went ; it fell  
Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn :  
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
Dared not to glance at her good mother's face,  
But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd gift,  
And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus attired ;  
And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,  
But rested with her sweet face satisfied ;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly said,

‘ O my new mother, be not wroth or grieved  
At thy new son, for my petition to her.  
When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were so sweet,  
Made promise, that whatever bride I brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun in Heaven.  
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hall,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair Queen,  
No hand but hers, should make your Enid burst  
Sunlike from cloud—and likewise thought perhaps,



## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

That service done so graciously would bind  
The two together ; fain I would the two  
Should love each other : how can Enid find  
A nobler friend ? Another thought was mine ;  
I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I was  
loved,

I doubted whether daughter's tenderness,  
Or easy nature, might not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal ;  
Or whether some false sense in her own self  
Of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall ;  
And such a sense might make her long for court  
And all its perilous glories : and I thought,  
That could I someway prove such force in her  
Link'd with such love for me, that at a word  
(No reason given her) she could cast aside  
A splendour dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer ; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted usage ; then I felt  
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,  
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,  
A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts :  
And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your costly gift

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees,  
Who knows? another gift of the high God,  
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you  
          thanks.'

He spoke : the mother smiled, but half in tears,  
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her in it,  
And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd  
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,  
By the flat meadow, till she saw them come ;  
And then descending met them at the gates,  
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the sun ;  
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,  
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,  
'Put on your worst and meanest dress,' she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

END OF VOL. VII









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